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Seventy-third year

Provisional

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Thursday, 14 June 2018, 3.15 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Nebenzia/Mr. Polyanskiy	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Michon
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Tachco

Agenda

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2018/541)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2018/541)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/541, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali.

I now give the floor Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to share with Security Council members the most recent developments on the political, security and humanitarian situation in Mali, as reflected in the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/541).

The 12 months since the adoption of resolution 2364 (2017), in June 2017, were the most encouraging in terms of progress in the peace process since the signing, three years ago, of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which was the outcome of the Algiers process. At the same time, the security environment remains volatile, and unfortunately it has led to the loss of life among the civilian population, the Malian defence and security forces, the French Barkhane force and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The number of MINUSMA Blue Helmets to have lost their lives in Mali over the past year as a result of attacks has raised the total number to 101 since the deployment of the Mission.

It was in order to pay tribute to those fallen peacekeepers that the Secretary-General decided to visit Mali to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping on 29 May. That visit enabled him to observe the spirit of dialogue and collective responsibility that enabled the Malian parties to achieve considerable progress in implementing the Agreement in recent months and to lay the foundation for credible, inclusive and peaceful elections.

Progress in the implementation of the peace Agreement includes, inter alia, the establishment of interim authorities in the five regions in the north of Mali; the strengthening of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Gao and its establishment in Kidal and Timbuktu, with 160 and 47 combatants, respectively, to date; and the start of the pre-registration phase for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, which is an extremely important element in that context. That progress reflects a positive momentum in the peace process, which inspires hope. However, it falls short and comes after three years of delays and persistent obstacles in the implementation of the Agreement. Furthermore, during the past year, some important steps to sustain the peace process and strengthen political dialogue have not been achieved. I would mention in that regard, among others, the charter for national reconciliation, which was intended to strengthen the gains of the Conference of National Understanding, held in March 2017, and to constitutional reform, which was postponed until after the presidential election. Moreover, the involvement of civil society, in particular women, in the peace process remains insufficient to date. Peace must be built on an inclusive and participatory foundation to ensure its sustainability and ownership by all.

That imperative is all the more important given that the past two weeks have been marked by worrying political tensions, fuelled by the upcoming presidential election, which is scheduled to be held in six weeks' time. Those tensions culminated in demonstrations in Bamako on 2 June, where there were violent clashes among supporters of the opposition and Malian security forces. That violence is regrettable, and the Secretary-General condemned the ban on the holding of the demonstration by the Malian authorities. Subsequently, the authorization of a new request to demonstrate introduced by the opposition and the peaceful holding

of the march on 8 June bode well for an easing of the situation, which is welcome and which we must encourage and help the Malian actors to maintain.

The presidential election is a crucial stage and should be a milestone in the consolidation of democracy in Mali. Priority must given to cooperation among all actors and the promotion an inclusive and constructive political dialogue that is conducive to the peaceful settlement of disputes, so that the conditions are met for the holding of peaceful elections. MINUSMA will continue to play an active role in that regard, including by continuing to support the Malian authorities and political actors through the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General as well as by providing logistical and technical support and contributing to security for electoral activities. The Special Representative's good offices have already helped to support key preparatory steps in the electoral process, such as the review of the electoral law, but they have also facilitated dialogue among political actors and eased tensions following the demonstrations by the opposition on 2 June.

We think it pertinent to stress that the United Nations is not in a position to certify the election results, as requested by the opposition parties, as that activity is not part of the mandate of MINUSMA. Furthermore, any certification exercise of an electoral process must involve the whole process, and not only the results of the elections, and would have required prior authorization by the Security Council.

Following the elections, our attention should be focused on mobilizing all actors in order to generate new and significant steps towards the implementation of key institutional reforms outlined in the Agreement. I welcome the publication of the first report of the independent observer, presented to the members of the Agreement Monitoring Committee on 28 May at its most recent regular meeting. The report underscores the importance for the parties to focus their efforts on the strategic pillars of the Agreement relating to long-term objectives, including the creation of a new governance architecture for Mali, the reconstitution and redeployment of a representative national army and the creation of a development zone for the north. Furthermore, we hope that the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017), concerning Mali, can help to remove some of the obstacles that continue to undermine the implementation of the Agreement.

The worrying situation in central Mali presents us with even more complex challenges. The political and security environment in that region has highlighted not only the lack of political dialogue, but also the challenges posed to democratic and territorial governance, which have been characterized by an erosion of the presence and legitimacy of the State institutions.

It was in order to help respond to the multifaceted challenges facing Mali and to breathe new life into the implementation of the peace Agreement that the Secretary-General mentioned in his report the idea of a common vision — a pact — for peace that would serve as a catalyst to strengthen the inclusive nature of the political process before and after the elections. That initiative would involve the Government, the United Nations, the Security Council and other international and regional partners. Its primary objective would be to reaffirm the centrality of the peace Agreement in resolving the crisis in Mali and to underscore once again the commitment of the United Nations to the mechanisms provided for in the Agreement, in particular the Agreement Monitoring Committee, chaired by Algeria, whose role is essential in international mediation. The initiative could also cover the key institutional reforms I have just mentioned, the implementation of which should be accelerated the day after the elections.

(*spoke in English*)

To better support such an integrated strategic approach at the political level, the United Nations must also take steps to improve integration at the operational level, while leveraging the comparative advantages of its different agencies, funds and programmes.

In that spirit, the recently concluded independent strategic review of MINUSMA recommended that the United Nations country team take the lead in humanitarian, recovery, development and peacebuilding efforts, including supporting Government efforts to deliver long-awaited peace dividends in an equitable, responsible and inclusive manner, including improving access to basic social services, such as education, health and clean water, as well as providing more livelihood opportunities, in particular for women and youth. United Nations efforts to prevent violent extremism should also be based on a coordinated, cross-sector strategy. To support those objectives, the review team called upon the United Nations country team to enhance its presence in the north and centre of the country.

With regard to MINUSMA, the Secretary-General is recommending a series of adjustments suggested by the review, aimed at underscoring the primacy of politics in the Mission's role. That will involve a shift in focus, prioritization and the implementation of the Mission's mandated tasks to maximize its role in support of the Agreement and in amplifying the peace process.

The Mission is also to assess its current physical footprint against political priorities, factoring in the constraints posed by the operational theatre, the difficulties in generating resources for the United Nations efforts in Mali and how to more effectively work with other stakeholders supporting peace and stability in Mali. That will include adopting a more tailored approach to the protection of civilians, particularly in the centre of the country, which is characterized by complex and localized dynamics, and leveraging non-force assets.

Any changes in the Mission's configuration will be carefully evaluated, in consultation with partners on the ground, and a timeline will be developed to ensure a sequenced approach. In that regard, the Secretariat has worked on an implementation framework. The support and assistance of MINUSMA should be regularly reviewed not only on the basis of progress in the implementation of the peace agreement but also with regard to governance and political reforms, in line with the stated objectives of the proposed mobilization for peace.

Moreover, given the critical juncture at which Mali now finds itself a few weeks ahead of the elections, but also in view of their aftermath, we will intensify our reporting and monitoring efforts, including through the use of consolidated benchmarks, drawing on the peace Agreement and the initiative for peace, as well as the plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the strategic review. In line with that objective, we would wish for future iterations of the report of the Secretary-General to focus more closely on describing progress against those benchmarks.

MINUSMA will continue to cooperate closely with other security actors operating in Mali, including the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), Operation Barkhane and the European Union Training Mission in Mali. I welcome this opportunity to reiterate the steadfast support of the United Nations for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, to which MINUSMA stands ready to provide operational and logistical support, as mandated by the Security Council.

At the same time, I wish to recall that States members of the G-5 Sahel remain accountable for the conduct of operations, with full respect for human rights, international law and international humanitarian law. Such gross human rights violations as those reportedly perpetrated in Boulikessi on 19 May by elements of the Malian armed forces operating under the Joint Force must, and will, be effectively addressed through the appropriate mechanisms. In that context, the Government of Mali has already adopted a number of measures to address that very serious situation. To that end, MINUSMA continues to support the ongoing investigations by the Malian and G-5 Sahel Joint Force authorities.

Allow me to conclude by underlining that stronger support to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, including through predictable and sustainable financial resources, is critical not only to ensuring the success of the Joint Force but also to reducing the risk of human rights violations during counter-terrorism operations by increasing the monitoring and oversight capacity.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Michon (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations for his very enlightening statement. I also welcome the presence around the table of the Malian Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and thank him for having made the trip to New York in order to participate in our work.

As the Secretary-General emphasized in his report (S/2018/541), support for the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali must remain the foremost priority of us all in Mali. Three years after its signing, it is clear that many of the commitments made have still not been implemented. Such delays, which are partly due to the lack of political will on the part of the stakeholders, are worrying, first, because they increasingly call into question the very relevance of the Agreement and, secondly, because there can be no lasting stability in Mali, and more broadly in the Sahel, without the full implementation

of the Agreement. It is therefore urgent that significant progress be made.

In that context, we noted with satisfaction the mobilization of the Prime Minister of Mali and the progress made in recent months. The Secretary-General's meeting with the parties during his visit to Mali last month affirmed that positive momentum, which must now be continued and built on. For us, in the short term, that means strengthening the mixed units of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in northern Mali, ensuring the effective functioning of the local authorities and initiating the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. We will follow those various elements closely over the coming months.

The responsibility of the international community, in accordance with the actual terms of the peace Agreement, is to take the necessary measures to encourage all the parties to meet their commitments. In that regard, the first report of the independent observer is a useful contribution. We encourage him to continue his work by issuing regular reports that identify the obstacles, define the responsibilities and make recommendations that will enable us to move forward. All Malian actors must also be aware that the Security Council is closely following the implementation of their commitments. In that regard, France has started work on identifying those responsible for hindering the implementation of the Agreement on the ground. Failure to implement the commitments contained in the most recent road map would lead us to having to broaden the scope of individuals that could be subject to sanctions measures.

France fully shares the concerns expressed over the situation in central Mali, which calls for a strong response from the Malian authorities with the full support of the international community and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). It is crucial that such a response be based on a balanced approach that combines action in the area of security and development, governance and human rights efforts. In that regard, we are deeply concerned about the allegations of various cases of human rights violations in the context of counter-terrorism operations undertaken by the Malian armed forces. Such allegations must be promptly investigated and the perpetrators prosecuted if they are proven. The recommendations made by MINUSMA in the context of the human rights due diligence policy must also be fully implemented. The support that MINUSMA can provide to the Malian armed forces and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel is, of course, linked to that.

The upcoming electoral cycles over the next months, in particular the presidential elections, will be a significant milestone for Malian democracy. It is especially important that the presidential election be conducted in a peaceful, credible and transparent way. The actions of the Government to enhance the credibility of the electoral process at the technical level are in the right direction. Those efforts must be continued and accompanied by the resumption of a constructive dialogue between the Government and the opposition. In that regard, the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the representative of the African Union on the ground should be welcomed. Lastly, the right to peaceful protest and freedom of expression must be respected and all actors must show the necessary restraint throughout the electoral cycle.

Given those many challenges, the renewal of the MINUSMA mandate for another 12 months is absolutely essential to the stability of Mali and the region. The recommendations of the strategic review, which are included in the Secretary-General's report, provide us with an opportunity to ensure that the resources that we are collectively harnessing in Mali are used in the most effective way possible. We want to make the best use of them.

In that context, France will approach the renewal of the mandate with several objectives: first, promoting a clear and realistic mandate with a limited number of priorities that are adapted to the situation; secondly, doing the utmost to ensure that the Mission has the necessary capacities to discharge its mandate and encourage every effort to reduce its security exposure through targeted and adapted measures that are coordinated with all the stakeholders on the ground; thirdly, encouraging the Mission to better communicate the specific nature of its mandate and its work to the local actors, while recognizing that it is part of a broader security architecture, where each force has its added value and shares the same goal, namely, support for the implementation of the peace Agreement; fourthly, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach, particularly in response to the increasing threat to the central part of the country, in support of the Malian authorities; and lastly, fifthly, recalling the importance

of the good offices role of the Mission for the smooth running of the upcoming electoral cycles.

Finally, more broadly, France is convinced that support for the implementation of the peace Agreement must continue to remain the strategic objective of the Mission. That strategic objective must be pursued within the framework of a partnership approach among Mali, the Council and the United Nations and on the basis of reciprocal commitments, the implementation of which will be regularly monitored. Against that backdrop, we fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation for a pact for peace, to be concluded with the Malian authorities following the forthcoming presidential elections.

Everyone should bear in mind that maintaining a mission as large and exposed as MINUSMA in its current configuration is not sustainable without substantial progress on the peace process track. We must therefore move forward together, in a responsible manner, in order to ensure its success. France's unwavering commitment can be counted on in that regard.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his very insightful briefing. I also extend my thanks to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali, Mr. Coulibaly, for joining us here in the Security Council.

On the fifth anniversary of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), it is time to take stock of the Mission's achievements and the remaining challenges. I will address three main elements: first, the political situation; secondly, the mandate; and, thirdly, the effectiveness of peacekeeping.

First, with regard to the political situation, progress in the peace process has been hard fought. While we welcome recent promising developments, we must recognize that the record over the past five years has been bleak. The Malian parties must together ensure expedited progress in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, including the full and effective participation of women.

We welcome the Secretary-General's suggestions to give new impetus to the political process. That requires the development of a pact for peace based on clear criteria. Our patience is running out. The forthcoming elections will be an important test for the Malian parties, who will have to prove their commitment to the country's stability. We call on the Malian authorities to ensure an inclusive electoral process and political dialogue, leaving space for debate and dissenting voices. On that point, we recall the need for all actors, including law enforcement agencies, to act with restraint.

Secondly, with respect MINUSMA's mandate, the Mission's support to the political process and its mediation have proved very valuable. We share the Secretary-General's view that the key to the Mission's success lies in setting clear priorities. First and foremost, the MINUSMA must focus on supporting the implementation of the main provisions of the Agreement — the effective establishment of legitimate State bodies and services, decentralization, security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes and reconciliation.

Furthermore, allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights laws are too often not prosecuted. The importance of the Mission's accountability tasks, including in its judicial and corrections work, cannot be minimized. While, as mentioned by the Under-Secretary-General, MINUSMA has a role to play in central Mali with regard to reconciliation and conflict prevention at the local level, that should not affect its primary mission in the north.

The repercussions of Mali's instability are felt beyond the country's borders, above all throughout the Sahel and in Europe. The stability of Mali, and the region as a whole, is crucial in combating threats such as human trafficking and illegal migration, terrorism and organized crime. Coordination and cooperation between the various security actors are essential if we are to respond effectively to those problems, including the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, Operation Barkhane and the European Union Mission.

In order to define effective strategies to support sustainable peace and stability, MINUSMA must also improve its information on how the illegal economy influences conflict dynamics in Mali and beyond. That includes trafficking in drugs, weapons and human beings. Cooperation with United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, is crucial in that regard.

Thirdly, and finally, I will address the concerns regarding the effectiveness of peacekeeping. After five years in existence, we can consider that MINUSMA

has reached maturity. Critical reflection on the Mission can improve the achievement of its mandate. The comprehensive action plan drawn up in response to the Santos Cruz report and the measures already taken to implement it are to be welcomed. We urge the United Nations to implement the recommendations as soon as possible. Given the complex context in which the Mission takes place, compartmentalization must be avoided. As the Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte stated at the launch of Action for Peacekeeping, during our presidency of the Council in March, an integrated approach must be firmly applied at both strategic and operational levels, not only within the framework of the Mission but also in strategic coordination with the United Nations country team (see S/PV.8218). In that context, we call upon the United Nations to develop a mission-wide strategic plan as soon as possible.

In conclusion, I salute all the men and women who have done their utmost to promote peace and stability in Mali since the launch of MINUSMA. We pay particular tribute to the 174 peacekeepers who paid the highest price in defending and promoting lasting peace in Mali.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his excellent briefing on the political, security and humanitarian situations in Mali. I would also like to thank Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, for his presence here today. I welcome him to New York.

My delegation would like to commend the personal commitment of Secretary-General António Guterres to work for the definitive settlement of the Malian crisis, as demonstrated by his visit on 29 and 30 May, which enabled him to exchange views with all stakeholders on the challenges to be met with a view to the advent of peace and stability in Mali.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the encouraging progress made in the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which remains the appropriate framework for all current initiatives to restore peace and stability in that country. My delegation therefore urges all stakeholders to take ownership of the road map, adopted on 22 March, with a view to the diligent implementation of the priority actions defined by the Agreement Monitoring Committee, in accordance with the recommendations of resolution 2295 (2016).

In that connection, the presidential elections on 29 July constitute an important means of settling the crisis in Mali. My country calls on the United Nations Integrated Multidimensional Mission for Stabilization in Mali (MINUSMA) to invest in securing the elections by lending technical and logistical support to the Malian armed forces, as well as redeploying administration throughout the country.

The security situation remains concerning in parts of Mali, due to ongoing asymmetrical attacks by terrorist groups against civilians and MINUSMA camps, as well as community violence in central Mali. My delegation therefore invites the international community to provide MINUSMA with the logistical capacity required to prevent attacks and protect convoys, such as early warning equipment, armoured personnel carriers and medical evacuation and health-care helicopters. Furthermore, the deployment of force multipliers would bolster MINUSMA's capabilities and enable it to better protect United Nations staff and civilians.

With regard to the protection of civilians, in particular in the centre of the country, which has fallen prey to inter-community violence, it is vital to deploy United Nations police units and boost the capacity of the local police in order to restore State authority. With regard to the humanitarian situation, which is also a source of concern, Côte d'Ivoire notes with regret that the 2018 humanitarian response plan, which was assessed at $263 million, has been financed at just 24 per cent.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes ongoing efforts to operationalize the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), in accordance with resolution 2391 (2017). A strengthened partnership between MINUSMA and the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel, as well as greater coordination with all forces on Malian territory — the Operation Barkhane forces, the Malian armed forces and the European Union Training Mission in Mali — will be a valuable asset in combating terrorism. It is also important to continue building the capacities of the Malian armed forces so as to enable the Government to take gradual and irreversible responsibility for the security of the country and of its people.

My delegation commends Ellen Margrethe Løj for her outstanding work at the head of an independent team within the framework of the MINUSMA strategic

review. The sound conclusions and relevant proposals bode well for a better understanding of the current security and political situation in Mali as we seek to renew MINUSMA's mandate. Côte d'Ivoire agrees with the experts of the independent team that combating terrorism and organized transnational crime is a challenge for regional security and therefore requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach. My country endorses the proposed pact for peace between the Malian Government, the Security Council, the United Nations and international partners.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General to renew MINUSMA's mandate. It urges all stakeholders in Mali to redouble their efforts to implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in order to achieve a final settlement of the crisis.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing and welcome His Excellency Mr. Coulibaly to the Council today.

The United Kingdom continues to support the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We recognize the challenging circumstances in which its military and civilian personnel operate and unequivocally condemn the recent attacks against MINUSMA personnel. MINUSMA must receive the tools it needs to protect its personnel adequately. At the same time we applaud the positive impact MINUSMA has had, in particular in supporting the recent progress on the peace agreement ahead of the upcoming elections.

As the Secretary-General makes clear in his recent report (S/2018/541), the deteriorating humanitarian and security situation in Mali is of great concern. During the June-to-August lean season this year, more than 4.3 million people will require humanitarian assistance. That is more than a quarter of the population. United Kingdom is one of the largest humanitarian donors to the Sahel region. Between 2015 and 2018, it has provided over $250 million of humanitarian aid, with an additional $67 million of assistance to the region in 2018. The international community in Mali and the Government must fulfil their humanitarian pledges and commitments in the light of the impending crisis.

Political stability is crucial in order to address the root causes of the situation in Mali. In that regard, the United Kingdom welcomes the recent positive steps taken by the parties towards the implementation of some of the key provisions of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and the Prime Minister's support to implement the agreement ahead of the upcoming elections. I agree with the representative of France on the key concrete next steps that must be taken.

The Council has become increasingly concerned about the slow pace of the implementation of the peace agreement at a time when MINUSMA troops are paying the price with their lives in unacceptable numbers. I understand that elections are under way, but I would urge the Malian Foreign Minister in the most respectful and friendly way to take back to all parties to the peace agreement and to the presidential candidates the expectation of the Council for fast and deep implementation of the agreement. Patience is running out.

It is also important that the key constituencies of Malian society, including women, play a central role in the implementation of the peace agreement and beyond. As we all know, an inclusive peace agreement is much more likely to succeed. We hope the Malian Government will observe the target it set for itself in its law of 2015 for a 30 per cent minimum representation for women in elected and nominated positions. The upcoming elections, if they are credible, free and fair, present an opportunity for Malians to express their democratic rights and commitments. Above all, the elections should not be the subject of violence. We call for calm from all parties at this time and for MINUSMA to support dialogue among the parties throughout the upcoming electoral cycles.

The United Kingdom is concerned about recent reports of human rights abuses in Mali and in particular those allegedly committed by the armed forces. The failure to protect civilians will erode trust in the Government and feed extremist recruitment narratives. We call upon all parties to comply with their obligations and put an end to violations and abuses.

As we begin negotiations on MINUSMA's mandate renewal, I again underline the United Kingdom's strong support for the Mission. It is important that we address the recommendations in the strategic review through that process to continue to improve MINUSMA's effectiveness on the ground. That includes further development of a long-term strategy for MINUSMA, a clear prioritization of tasks and recognition that other actors, including the United Nations country team, may be better placed to deliver results. While

we recognize the logic of consolidating MINUSMA's presence, we believe that maintaining the current geographical focus is important for the implementation of the peace agreement and the long-term stabilization of the country.

Lastly, it is essential that all actors across Mali and the Sahel take a coordinated and integrated approach, in line with the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. A solution that addresses the underlying causes of instability is the only way to ensure long-term security in the region. The ultimate solution will be a political one, underpinned by effective security and economic development. It must be inclusive, gender-responsive and ensure the full and equal participation of the whole of society, including in particular women, in order to succeed. It must provide economic opportunities and present an attractive alternative to violence and extremism. That is the best way to improve the lives of those who live in Mali and the best way to improve our collective peace and security.

Ms. Tachco (United States of America): I very much thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing. I welcome Foreign Minister Coulibaly.

(*spoke in French*)

It is a pleasure to see him here again in New York.

(*spoke in English*)

We are gravely concerned about the continued deterioration of the security situation and the corresponding worsening of the humanitarian situation in Mali. We are alarmed about the fact that over the past six months, nine peacekeepers and seven contractors of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) have been killed and 36 peacekeepers injured. The ongoing attacks against MINUSMA across central and northern Mali present a serious challenge to the meaningful implementation of MINUSMA's mandate. The number of casualties, coupled with the limited progress on the ground, highlight the need to think carefully about what we ask of MINUSMA.

The strategic review that the Under-Secretary-General briefed us on has provided an opening for a difficult conversation. Looking at the Council's observations over time and the helpful and specific recommendations provided by the review team, it is time to take action. This month, it is incumbent on the Council to contemplate how we can enable MINUSMA to support a more secure Mali and ensure that it makes substantive progress towards the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

First, we look towards July, when we expect free, fair, credible and transparent elections, with the full and meaningful participation of women. Successful elections will be essential to securing the gains that Mali has achieved so far. Establishing a meaningful dialogue among the Government, the political opposition and civil society, and ensuring that the political space is open for peaceful demonstration are important to ensuring that all parties see the elections as credible. We urge all stakeholders to resolve any disputes through established mechanisms, in accordance with the law.

We express our sincere appreciation to the Prime Minister and leadership of the signatory armed groups for their efforts over the past few months to find common ground and build momentum towards implementation of the peace agreement. But all of the parties have wasted far too much time over the past three years, during which little progress has been made. We share the Secretary-General's concern that there has not been enough meaningful progress on the implementation of the peace agreement, and we agree that MINUSMA should focus more of its efforts and limited resources on the political process. The Council should use all available means to bring a sense of urgency to the process and encourage quick progress in uniting the Malian people around a common project. If we do not see progress, then we should seriously consider how long we can sustain the Mission without the serious and active partnership of the parties.

MINUSMA operates in an incredibly challenging security environment, with few resources available to focus on initiatives beyond the protection of the Mission itself. Given that reality, it is time to streamline the mandate to increase support to political engagement and scale down the Mission's focus on less critical activities. Such streamlining will necessitate tough choices as we seek to eliminate, refine or sequence mandated tasks that are either not directly supporting the political process or have stalled altogether.

We, like others, are also worried about growing instability in central Mali, and we support the review's recommendation that some reconfiguration of the force in the north is necessary. The consolidation of bases could reduce troop exposure and free MINUSMA resources to complete tasks beyond force protection.

Such an undertaking ought to be conducted at the discretion of the Mission leadership, with the safety of the Mission and its personnel in mind.

We also share the assessment that failure to contain the crisis in the central region could have a significantly detrimental impact on the stabilization and social cohesion of the country, risking a reversal of the small gains realized so far. We want to see MINUSMA prioritize the expansion of the force's footprint and its community engagement in central Mali to better address protection-of-civilian concerns. The strategic review also raises the concern that we share about the parameters of service provision to non-United Nations entities. The report (S/2018/541) rightly points out that support to non-United Nations entities risks jeopardizing the Mission's impartiality and its legitimacy in the political space.

Finally, the United States applauds the United Nations for its continued attention to human rights incidents, especially the investigations into numerous and credible allegations of violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. We would like to echo the concerns regarding the Malian security forces, and we urge the Government of Mali to swiftly investigate allegations of human rights violations by its forces and hold accountable those responsible. For Mali's peace process to succeed and its population to unite around its Government, the people must not fear the very security forces that are sent to protect them.

As elections approach, Mali is at yet another crossroads. We in the Council are united in our support of Mali and in our desire to see the country's leaders come together to make peace, govern the entire country and ensure the Malian people's well-being, safety and opportunity.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this meeting and thanks Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix for the valuable information he has provided.

(*spoke in French*)

I would also like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, to New York.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

Peru notes with concern the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Mali, particularly in the centre and north of the country. Terrorist group activities, clashes among armed groups, attacks perpetrated against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) personnel and the limited presence of the State in various areas of the country persist. However, we look forward to the new road map for the implementation of the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and the role played by the Agreement Monitoring Committee, the Carter Center and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali, as well as the establishment of the mixed units of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Kidal and Timbuktu.

On this occasion, I will broach three specific issues: first, the political process; secondly, the security situation; and thirdly, the renewal of MINUSMA's mandate.

On my first point, after three years of waiting, it is necessary to accelerate the implementation of the peace agreement. The expectations generated by the new road map must not lead to further frustration. To that end, we deem it essential that Malian citizens take full ownership of the process and that the international community redouble its support. We wish to underline that holding free and fair presidential elections is crucial for the future of the country. It is important that the process be conducted in a stable political context, with regional and international backing, so as to guarantee the mass participation of the population and engage more women and young people in politics.

On the security situation, we commend the efforts of the Malian Government in implementing the programme for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, as well as the reforms that it has been promoting to strengthen its security services. However, much remains to be done in that area. We believe that it is necessary to pay special attention to the activities of violent extremist groups, particularly in the centre of the country, which exploit the limited presence of the State to expand their influence and establish their own administration. That reinforces the vicious circle of intercommunal violence.

We also note with concern that law enforcement agencies share equal responsibility for increasing human rights violations, although they are the very

entities called upon to protect the population and the rule of law required to guarantee a sustainable peace. In response, it is necessary to strengthen the judiciary and guarantee access to justice. In that regard, we believe that it is important to work on the prevention and resolution of conflicts at the local level and to address their root causes. That implies promoting dialogue with communities and developing inclusive, transparent and accountable institutions that are capable of recognizing and addressing the legitimate demands of the population.

Thirdly, Peru believes that the support needed by the authorities and the Malian population to advance the country's political process and improve the security situation is bolstered by the strategic review on the activities of MINUSMA, which seeks to improve the Mission's performance and results in response to the current situation on the ground. To that end, we underscore the need to strengthen its support for the achievement of the peace agreement, as well as the political and security reforms that the country needs. We agree with the recommendation presented by the Secretary-General to the Council to renew the mandate of the Mission for one year.

Peru recognizes and supports the work that MINUSMA carries out in a particularly adverse environment and in complicated operational situations. We believe that its deployment on the ground is crucial to promoting stability in Mali. In addition, it is important that MINUSMA strengthen its coordination with the United Nations country team, because responding to the conflict and crisis and, ultimately, the building of a sustainable peace, require a multidimensional, coherent and integrated approach that includes all actors involved in the development of the country.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia thanks the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his briefing on the situation in the Republic of Mali and developments in the activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) on the ground. We also join our colleagues in welcoming the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali, Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly.

Five years have elapsed since the establishment of MINUSMA and three since the signing of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Unfortunately, despite these events, Mali has not yet found the stability necessary to allow its people to live in an atmosphere of peace. The high degree of complexity and fragility of the humanitarian and security situation in that country, which has spread throughout the Sahel region, highlights the consequences of interventionism and regime change policies since, following the 2011 conflict in Libya, the side effects of that destabilization have included the regrettable results of chaos and terrorism.

Asymmetric threats, terrorist threats, endless clashes between armed groups and intercommunal violence continue to jeopardize the integrity and lives of the civilian population — not to mention the fact that they have slowed down the country's economic growth and development, extended and compounded the presence and consequences of transnational organized crime in the subregion, and significantly diminished the capacities of the Malian security forces, which have suffered complex attacks while defending themselves and protecting their population.

We are concerned that, in the northern and central sectors of Mali, the presence of mercenaries, drug and arms traffickers and human traffickers has turned their criminal activities into a modus vivendi that impedes the consolidation of the peace Agreement, and which is also increasingly contributing to the deterioration of the security and political situation.

We consider it crucial to continue supporting the process of implementing the peace agreement. In that regard, we call on the Malian Government and the international community to join forces in a more coherent and effective manner by building and strengthening measures of mutual trust. In that connection, we call once again on the countries that have pledged financial support for MINUSMA to honour their commitments; Mali urgently requires the main guarantor of this process, the international community, to vigorously promote the measures necessary to help the Malian Government to strengthen its presence throughout its territory, as well as to contribute to the full reconstitution of its armed forces in order to create adequate conditions for the protection of the civilian population.

We also commend the important efforts of the Government of Mali with regard to the appointment of interim authorities, the creation of legislative and electoral timetables, as well as the application of benchmarks for the effective implementation of the

peace Agreement and its provisions in the framework of the inclusive political dialogue. Prime Minister Maïga's visit to the most affected regions demonstrates the Malian Government's commitment to security. We must also consider the significant mobilization of resources generated from the national fund for the support of territorial collectivities in the regions of Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal, Taoudenni and Ménaka, which clearly give a fundamental boost to the State presence in those localities.

We also welcome the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of MINUSMA and thank him for his efforts. We recognize that the evolving challenges facing the Mission, including not only the violence of armed groups, but also the growing threat of violent extremism, transnational crime and asymmetric threats such as improvised explosive devices. With respect to the latter issue, we must commend the work of the United Nations Mine Action Service in implementing a framework for mitigating such threats through technical and strategic advice, which has reduced the number of victims of such threats.

With regard to the independent strategic review of MINUSMA, we are concerned about information regarding the lack of material capabilities that reduce its mobility and impede the efficient projection of its presence in the field. We also consider it important to continue to promote the implementation of the memorandum of understanding with the Malian Government to support the armed forces in the operational, intelligence, medical evacuation, explosive ordnance disposal and management and demining activities. Those aspects are of vital importance for both immediate and long-term stabilization in Mali. Therefore, the demobilized elements must be effectively integrated throughout the peace process through peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding activities.

Finally, it is clear that the security situation in Mali and the Sahel region still presents major challenges. Bolivia highlights the outstanding efforts made by the regional and subregional organizations, led by the African Union in cooperation and coordination with the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. We call on and strongly encourage the international community to continue to contribute technical support and economic and humanitarian cooperation to all initiatives that help the population achieve stability and definitive peace in Mali and the region.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his valuable briefing on the latest developments in Mali, especially in the light of the upcoming presidential elections in July and the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We also welcome the presence and participation of Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

I would like to address three aspects as part of our discussion today, namely the political situation, the security situation and the renewal of MINUSMA's mandate.

First, on the political situation, we followed with interest the latest visit of the Secretary-General to Mali, particularly after all relevant parties have signed the new road map in March. We are pleased that real progress has been made recently in implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We also welcome the efforts of the Prime Minister to move the peace process forward, as well as the steps taken by his Government, in cooperation with all relevant parties, to activate the Operational Coordination Mechanism and to provide the delivery of basic services to northern Mali. We call on all parties to commit to implementing the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme as soon as possible.

We welcome the first report of the independent observer, the Carter Center, and its comments with respect to the implementation of the agreement. The report stresses the need to build trust between the Malian people and the Government while involving the people in the political peace process. We believe that achieving this objective will be totally contingent on the implementation of the basic elements of the peace Agreement, which is the main terms of reference to solve the crisis in Mali, including carrying out the necessary reforms and focusing on long-term and sustainable stability. We call on all parties to cooperate and to step up their efforts in order to make progress in this area for achieving the aspirations of the friendly Malian people.

We look forward to asmooth and transparent holding of presidential elections in July that includes all constituencies of Malian society. We appreciate the role of MINUSMA in preparing for the electoral process by

providing technical, security and logistical support. We encourage the Mission to continue its support in the coming period, especially after the elections, in order to reduce tensions among all parties. We also call on those parties to cooperate with the Malian authorities to ensure the security of the electoral process.

Secondly, concerning the security situation in Mali, we remain concerned as threats from terrorist groups continue, evidenced by the awful recent attack on the MINUSMA camp. We appreciate MINUSMA's efforts to contain that threat and to reduce any further damage. The role of peacekeepers in Mali remains important and critical, and the Security Council must ensure their protection by providing them with the necessary equipment in order to help them perform their work and shoulder their responsibilities. We are deeply saddened by the loss of life of 101 peacekeepers.

Terrorist groups pose a threat not only to peacekeepers, Malian forces and the French force, but also to Malian civilians, especially in central Mali. We are concerned by the deaths of more than 40 civilians during the period under review, and we welcome all the initiatives of the Government to counter these threats. Regrettably, we have noticed an increase in the use of improvised explosive devices, rising to almost 100 incidents since the beginning of this year. That is why the Mission must step up its efforts in training and outreach, and we encourage it to pursue its efforts in the future to reduce the damage resulting from these explosive devices.

Finally, regarding the renewal of the MINUSMA mandate, we welcome the findings of the strategic review led by Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, and we thank her very much for her efforts. We stress the need to take the review's recommendations into consideration in the next renewal of the mandate. The scope of the mandate must be clarified in order to ensure its effectiveness and success in advancing the political process in the country. We agree with the recommendation to prioritize the tasks of the Mission so as to ensure the full implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Let me begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his very informative briefing on recent developments in Mali.

(*spoke in French*)

I take this opportunity to welcome the presence among us of His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

(*spoke in English*)

In the face of the upcoming renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), I would like to focus my intervention around three issues: the political process, the situation of women and the MINUSMA mandate itself.

First, on the political process, the visit of Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga to the northern regions, including Kidal, the ongoing registration of combatants, and progress in the implementation of the road map are perceived as positive steps in the peace process. The holding of inclusive, transparent and credible elections will be crucial to securing the gains achieved so far by the parties in the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. It will therefore be crucial to create conditions for secure, peaceful and transparent elections. Efforts in this area, however, should be intensified and, despite the circumstances of the electoral process, the full implementation of the provisions of the agreement should be a top priority for the Malian authorities and completed as soon as possible.

We commend the neighbouring countries, including Algeria, for their support for the peace process in Mali and their commitment to ensuring the stabilization of that country and the Sahel region. However, the international community should increase its efforts to comprehensively address the crisis in the country. In that regard, I would like to reiterate our support for all necessary measures taken by the Security Council against individuals and entities engaged in actions or policies that threaten the implementation of the peace agreement in Mali.

Secondly, women continue to be underrepresented in the mechanisms for implementing and monitoring the peace agreement. Only 3 per cent of members of the mechanisms are women, which is a very low indicator. Regarding sexual and gender-based violence, according to UN-Women more than 1 in 10 females between the ages of 15 and 49 in Mali have experienced sexual violence. There is currently no national law in

Mali specifically addressing violence against women. Furthermore, women and the girls who suffer sexual and gender-based violence are often stigmatized or even excluded by their communities. Taking the aforementioned problems into account, strong language on gender equality and women's rights, as well as women's meaningful participation in the peace process, should be maintained in the upcoming resolution on Mali.

The discussion of the new MINUSMA mandate is relevant to the current security situation in Mali. Poland supports the proposal to revitalize the United Nations presence in the north in order to ensure the effectiveness and impact of the Mission, and to strengthen its presence in the centre of Mali, where the situation is critical and the number of civilian casualties is unprecedented.

We would also welcome a strengthened and more active leadership role for MINUSMA in Mali's peace process. There has been positive progress in the implementation of key security provisions of the peace agreement, but there remains much to be done in such areas as security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, governance, institutional reform, the fight against impunity, and development. MINUSMA's good offices should be used in a more extensive manner to promote the rapid implementation of all the outstanding provisions of the political agreement so as to ensure the inclusivity of the peace process, including the promoton of the engagement of non-signatory actors.

Last but not least, we see added value in the continuation of MINUSMA support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, and Poland supports that effort. However, the leadership of MINUSMA has to ensure that this engagement would not negatively impact the Mission's own capacity.

In conclusion, Poland commends the tireless efforts of the men and women of MINUSMA in extremely difficult circumstances, and looks forward to the further extension of the MINUSMA mandate.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): Let me begin by recognizing the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali. We thank him for being with us today.

Let me also thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his useful briefing to the Council today.

We welcome the progress that has been made in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali in recent months. This includes the establishment of Operational Coordination Mechanisms in Kidal and Timbuktu and the Prime Minister's visit to the northern and central regions. It is now crucial that the implementation of the peace agreement be intensified and that the current momentum be maintained through the presidential election campaign. It is also imperative that the eventual winner of the presidential election continue to prioritize the peace process.

Inclusivity is an essential prerequisite for building a sustainable peace in any country. That is also true in Mali. As stated in the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/541), little progress has been made in ensuring women's meaningful engagement in the peace process. We must step up our efforts in this regard, and we call on all parties to urgently address this shortfall.

We are concerned by the lack of trust between the Government and opposition parties, highlighted most recently by violent clashes sparked by demonstrations. It is crucial that political actors and parties put aside their differences and work towards the holding of inclusive, transparent and credible elections, for the good of all Malians.

The continued deterioration of the situation in central Mali, leading to an unprecedented number of civilian casualties, remains of great concern. We are particularly worried by serious allegations of human rights abuses and violations in the context of counter-terrorism operations being carried out by the Malian armed forces. We call on the Government to step up protection efforts in the region and to conduct investigations of alleged abuses and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Restoring trust in the Government and building the legitimacy of State functions in the region, including by providing basic social services, is essential. It will also be important to take local dynamics into account and address the fundamental causes of instability, including conflicts over resources and land, inequalities, exclusion and climate change.

Turning to the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), we welcome the conclusions of the independent strategic review, as presented in the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/541). It makes

important recommendations on how to better align the Mission's objectives and strategic vision with the realities on the ground and key provisions of the Peace Agreement, including those on decentralization, security-sector reform and reconciliation. The Peace Agreement is the only possible path to peace and stability in Mali, and supporting its implementation should remain the Mission's priority. For that reason, we support the idea of enhancing MINUSMA's political role as well as developing a pact for peace, which would link assistance to existing benchmarks and timelines, including progress on governance and institutional reforms.

We agree that the United Nations presence in Mali needs greater strategic coherence, since, along with integrated planning within the Mission, it remains essential to fulfilling the objectives of a common vision in support of the peace process and stabilization. It is clear that we must reinvigorate the United Nations efforts, together with those of the Malian authorities, to address the situation in central Mali. We support the recommendation of formulating a fully integrated plan that takes the multidimensional nature of the challenges in the region into account. Finally, it is important to ensure that the Mission's key civilian components, not least in the area of human rights, are safeguarded. In the light of the heavy security presence on the ground, monitoring and reporting on such issues is essential.

The situation in Mali has implications for the wider region. It is therefore important to ensure that the implementation of the Peace Agreement can proceed more rapidly and that peaceful, fair and transparent elections will be held in July. The United Nations has an important role to play in support of the national efforts and will continue to have our full support.

Mr. Zhang Dianbin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We would like to thank you for convening today's meeting, Mr. President, and to welcome Foreign Minister Coulibaly to the Security Council. We would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing.

The new Government in Mali has been working hard since it took office to advance the Malian peace process and implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, and has made some positive progress. The Government, the signatory armed groups and the relevant Malian stakeholders have made major efforts in that regard, which we welcome. Meanwhile, however, the security situation in northern and central Mali has got worse. There is rampant terrorist activity both in Mali iself and in neighbouring regions, which has a serious impact on the peace process. The international community should support Mali in its efforts to ensure peace and development.

First, it is important to assist the Malian parties in implementing the Peace Agreement. China hopes that the signatories to the Agreement will continue to demonstrate the necessary political will, work to implement all its provisions and engage in concerted reconstruction and development efforts so that the people can reap the benefit of a peace dividend. Basing its efforts on respect for Mali's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the international community should continue to support the country's peace process and help it to enhance its own development and governing capacity. The Malian Government is making intensive preparations for the forthcoming election in July. We hope that its concerted efforts and those of the people of Mali will make it a success. The international community should support the people of Mali in making their own decisions. The sanction mechanism for Mali should provide objective support to the political process and function in strict compliance with the Security Council's mandate.

Secondly, the international community should help Mali improve its security capabilities. The security challenges in northern and central Mali are becoming increasingly complex, and at the Government's request, the international community should continue to support it in enhancing its security and counter-terror capacities, so that it can gradually take on the responsibility for maintaining the security of the entire country. The issue of peace and security is closely tied to the situation in the surrounding regions, so we need to take advantage of regional cooperation to ensure an integrated approach to dealing with the terrorist activities in Mali and beyond. China welcomes the initiative of the Group of Five for the Sahel in forming a Joint Force to address security threats such as regional terrorism. It is important that African countries seek greater strength through unity and thereby safeguard peace and security on their continent and in the rest of world. China commends the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for the preparations it has made to support the Joint Force, and we hope that when conditions permit it will

begin providing the Joint Force with support as soon as possible.

Thirdly, we should support MINUSMA's work. China commends and supports MINUSMA and Special Representative Annadif in their efforts to promote the Malian peace process and strengthen the country's security capacity. The Mission's mandate expires at the end of June, and China will engage actively in the consultations on the draft resolution for its renewal. We hope that MINUSMA will continue to communicate with the Malian Government and help the country with its capacity-building and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The security of MINUSMA's peacekeepers is a serious issue. The violent attacks this year have resulted in an increase in the number of casualties. China notes the positive measures that the Secretariat and the Mission have taken to improve peacekeepers' safety and security, and we hope that MINUSMA will continue to work to improve those areas and ensure that the necessary supplies and resources are in place. It should also step up its communication with troop-contributing countries and donors in order to ensure that the Mission has all the equipment and resources it needs to discharge its mandate and protect itself.

There are more than 400 Chinese peacekeepers in Mali serving in the medical, engineering and security areas, and their work has been much praised. China will continue to give its firm support to the cause of fostering peace and development for the people of Mali and to contributing to the country's peace, stability and prosperity alongside the rest of the international community.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I am very pleased to be able to greet and welcome His Excellency Mr. Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his comprehensive briefing on the activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in supporting the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, as well as on the findings of the recent independent strategic review.

We note with satisfaction the renewed momentum that the Prime Minister has brought to the peace process and the other measures that have contributed to progress in implementing the Peace Agreement, as the Secretary-General mentions in his report (S/2018/541). We believe that the Secretary-General's solidarity visit to Mali from 29 to 31 May gave impetus to that positive momentum and sent a strong message in its recognition of the contribution that MINUSMA's sacrifices have made to peace and stability in Mali. We welcome the progress made in the operationalization of the mixed units of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, and the commitment that the signatories have made to the Mechanism. We also commend the Government's efforts to work with the signatories and the various stakeholders to foster an environment conducive to the holding of peaceful, credible and transparent elections throughout the country, especially the upcoming presidential election. However, in the light of the recent violent clashes sparked by the holding of demonstrations by opposition parties, we call upon all Malian parties to exercise maximum restraint, defuse political tensions through dialogue and work for the creation of a conducive environment for the smooth conduct of the elections. We also urge the speedy completion of the preparations for the conduct of peaceful and inclusive elections within the time frame set by the Constitution.

Despite the progress registered, the continuing deterioration of the security situation in Mali and the intercommunal clashes in the central parts of the country and violent attacks mainly targeting Tuareg communities in the south of the Ménaka region remain a source of concern. We strongly condemn the terrorist attacks against MINUSMA, the Malian defence and security forces, as well at the international forces and civilians in the north and centre of Mali. The destructive actions of the terrorists and armed groups are undermining the State's authority and worsening the humanitarian situation. Urgent action is needed to quickly reverse the situation.

Despite all the enormous political and security challenges and constraints related to human resources and equipment, MINUSMA forces are undertaking commendable tasks in supporting the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We appreciate the continued support of MINUSMA, in cooperation with other international partners, for the Malian authorities' efforts to combat terrorism and international organized crime, including information and intelligence sharing, as well as planning, training

and capacity-building. The role of MINUSMA continues to be indispensable, and we support the extension of its mandate for another 12 months in line with the recommendations of the Secretary-General.

We note the outcomes of the independent strategic review of MINUSMA and we believe the Mission's robust posture should be maintained. We also note with great interest that the review recommended, as did the Secretary-General, strengthening MINUSMA's support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel through assessed contributions. We look forward to engaging in the discussion on the renewal of the mandate of the Mission.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is grateful for the convening of this meeting and the comprehensive briefing provided by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix. We are also pleased to welcome once again to New York His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

Just a few days after the three-year anniversary of the signing of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali as a result of the Algiers process, once again we have an opportunity to assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Agreement and to evaluate the work and functioning of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). My Government welcomes the achievements made by the Government and the signatory movements in the implementation of the Agreement, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/541), although some challenges still remain. We especially underscore the timeline for priority actions and the road map — adopted, respectively, in January and March.

With regard to the measures and reforms on matters of security and defence, the redeployment of the army to several of the country's cities and the tentative resumption of mixed patrols composed of elements of the Malian defence and security forces and the platforms in the north, as agreed in 2016 within the framework of the Operational Coordination Mechanism, are positive signs that generate trust among the security forces and the various local armed groups. It should be recalled that the mixed patrols have been considered the impetus for the reconfiguration of the Malian armed forces, in which former members of rebel armed groups are included, and that the Mechanism's mission is fundamentally to protect and promote the progressive stabilization of the northern regions of the country.

Equatorial Guinea commends the efforts of the Government to stabilize the country and welcomes the Prime Minister's recent visit to the north, which we believe will contribute to finding a lasting solution to the problem.

Despite this encouraging climate, we believe that it is important that there be significant short- and medium-term progress in the economic and social spheres. In that regard, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea encourages the parties to redouble their efforts to ensure the timely implementation of the Agreement. Although the parties have reiterated their commitment to its implementation, the anticipated peace dividends, such as the provision of basic services, have not yet materialized for the population, despite the Agreement's provisions to establish a strategy for the development of the northern regions.

We hope that this positive trend of progress in the implementation of the Agreement will continue through the holding of the presidential elections in July. In that regard, my Government endorses the 3 June communiqué of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission calling on political actors in Mali to act with restraint and to refrain from any action that could increase tension and provoke greater political polarization. It is also important for the political leaders in Mali to ensure the holding of presidential elections under the necessary conditions of peace, security and transparency, so that they contribute to ending the crisis in Mali.

The political process in Mali must continue, as reflected in the country's Constitution. That requires strict compliance with the planned timetable for elections, namely, presidential elections now and legislative elections later. In the light of the mandate of MINUSMA under resolution 2364 (2017), the Mission must continue to provide technical support and exercise its good offices for the holding of the elections. We believe that those are aspects that should be included in the Mission's mandate.

My Government commends the efforts of the Secretary-General in conducting the independent strategic review of MINUSMA and agrees with its primary recommendations, namely, to support national

dialogue in order to promote ownership of the Agreement by the people of Mali and a strengthening of the nation beyond State reform; to promote a common vision among regional and international actors in support of the peace and stabilization process; and to promote a peace agreement among the Government, the Security Council, the United Nations and international partners under which assistance would be provided in accordance with clear reference points, including with regard to progress, good governance and political reforms.

MINUSMA has helped to stabilize the situation in the country. We believe that its current form has been very useful for the country and, therefore, we think it should continue as such. We support the renewal of its current mandate.

Mr. Temenov (Kazakhstan): We express our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his comprehensive briefing. My delegation joins others in warmly welcoming Mr. Tiéman Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, to today's meeting.

We fully endorse the recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/541) and would like to make the following observations for the Council's consideration.

First, our main priority should be to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Kazakhstan welcomes the increased cooperation between the Malian Government and other signatories, which has resulted in progress as evident in the deployment of mixed patrols in Kidal and Timbuktu and the registration of combatants eligible for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. We commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the African Union and the other relevant actors for their important role in facilitating the dialogue among the signatories.

My delegation encourages the parties to continue to show genuine will in advancing the implementation of the Agreement. We underscore the need to focus on the three long-term strategic pillars of the Agreement that are emphasized in the independent observer's report. We reiterate that the Agreement's key provisions with regard to encouraging national reconciliation, ensuring basic services and strengthening resilience, economic development, good governance and the rule of law are essential to the process of establishing lasting peace and stability in Mali. The genuine inclusion of women and young people in the peace process and in decision-making is also important to enduring stability. Another crucial task is ensuring the transparent, fair, peaceful and inclusive conduct of the presidential elections in July. We welcome the Government's electoral reforms and call on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the international community to provide adequate financial and technical assistance to the Government, which is crucial to the success of the electoral process.

Addressing the deteriorating humanitarian situation in northern and central Mali is equally important. We therefore call on international partners and donors to fund the humanitarian response plan for 2018. We urge all parties to comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

With regard to the upcoming renewal of the MINUSMA mandate, we support the independent strategic review's recommendations, including on ensuring a tailored approach to the protection of civilians mandate and prioritizing the Mission's tasks so as to increase its role in advancing the peace process. In order to address the Mission's capability gaps, it is critical to provide the contingents with better equipment and predeployment training commensurate with the situation of asymmetric conflict that Mali presents. It is also worth considering the concept of equipment-contributing countries.

Kazakhstan firmly believes that fully operationalizing the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel will substantially strengthen the efforts of MINUSMA and the Malian national security forces to combat terrorism and other cross-border threats. Finally, like others, we strongly condemn the violent attacks by terrorist groups on civilians, humanitarian workers, the Malian security forces and MINUSMA personnel. In conclusion, we would like to commend Special Representative Annadif and all the brave men and women representing the United Nations in Mali who are committed to peace in such a hazardous and challenging environment.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

We would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his briefing. We welcome Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign

Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, to today's meeting.

We support Bamako's efforts to normalize the situation in Mali. We note that in the past few months the process of implementing the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali has somewhat accelerated. The mixed patrols have finally been deployed to Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu and the processes for the cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants are continuing. There have been no significant violations in the preparations for the upcoming 29 July presidential elections. In that regard, we urge all Malian stakeholders to refrain from provocative action and work together in order to ensure that they go off peacefully.

However, there are still many reasons to be concerned. The geographic scope of terrorist and extremist activity has significantly expanded and we are seeing inter-ethnic clashes. The authorities' presence in many areas of central and northern Mali is still extremely limited, and unfortunately people's basic social needs there are not being met, while the humanitarian situation in the country is close to the crisis levels of 2012. In such circumstances there is nothing for the local young people to do besides joining the ranks of terrorist or criminal groups.

We have carefully read the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Mali (S/2018/541) and the independent strategic review of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). In general, we agree with their views and conclusions. Given the fact that in five years the crisis in Mali has not been resolved despite the peacekeeping presence there, we have to reconsider the current approach. We agree with the strategic review's assessment that it is unlikely that the situation in the country can be normalized by military means alone. We must focus on political mechanisms that can be developed and implemented by the Malians themselves. The only way to resolve the country's numerous complex issues is for its citizens themselves to play a direct leading role in the processes, which of course need international and regional support. If it is backed by the Malians themselves, we believe the strategic review's idea of a pact for peace could be a basis for making progress.

We also support the Secretary-General's proposal to review the priority areas of MINUSMA's work with a view to ensuring that it can fulfil its political tasks. First, however, the process should be gradual, and secondly, it should not interfere with the Mission's task of protecting the civilian population and helping to re-establish the national security forces. The issue of supplying the Mission with material and technical resources, including helicopters, is also very urgent, and we ask the countries that have made respective commitments to fulfil them as soon as possible.

It will be difficult to achieve a settlement in Mali without normalizing the situation in the region as a whole, while the situation in the country is a significant factor for security in Africa in general. We support the concrete steps taken by the Group of Five for the Sahel to establish their Joint Force in order to combat terrorism and organized crime, and we hope it will be fully deployed as soon as possible.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

Mr. Coulibaly (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June and to assure you of our full cooperation. I would also like to congratulate the delegation of Poland on its exemplary conduct of the Council's work during the previous month. I would like to express our gratitude to all of the members of the Council for their ongoing support to the peace process in Mali. And I thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his support and for his recent visit to Mali from 29 to 30 May in solidarity with the Malian people and the Blue Helmets.

My delegation takes note of the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/541), and we thank Mr. Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his comprehensive and faithful presentation of the report, including on the recent developments in Mali that have occurred since it was published.

First, we welcome the fact that the report emphasizes the recent progress made in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, including the start of operations for the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Kidal, Timbuktu and Gao; the Government's provision of heavy weapons

to strengthen the capabilities of the Mechanism's Gao battalion, considering that it has been operational since 2017; the ongoing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, with preregistration of former combatants; the establishment of interim authorities in regions that had been awaiting them and the provision of 8 billion African Financial Community francs in investment and technical support. Such progress also includes the transmission to the National Assembly of a draft law on the creation of territorial authorities in the regions of Ménaka and Taoudenni and the commencement of work on security sector reform. In addition to the total end of the belligerence between the Malian parties since the signing of the Agreement in 2015, those achievements constitute important steps in the peace process in Mali.

I am also pleased that the report underlines the determination of the Malian parties to work together to continue to step up the implementation of the Agreement. The Malian parties reaffirmed, with one voice, such commitment to the Secretary-General at his meeting with the members of the Agreement's Monitoring Committee in Bamako on 30 May.

The progress made speaks to the firm and constant political will of the President of the Republic of Mali, the Government and all the Malian parties to implement the Agreement, together with the international community. Such political will has been expressed through various initiatives since 2013 — beginning with the preliminary Ouagadougou agreement, the generalized decentralization of states in 2014, national meetings, the Conference on National Understanding, the charter on national understanding, the law on national understanding, which absolves all those involved in armed rebellions, excluding those who were prosecuted for serious crimes, and our own petition to the Council for a sanctions regime to encourage all parties to the Agreement to implement it. I want to remind members of the Council of that because it is important to bear in mind.

It is true that the implementation of the Agreement is experiencing some delays, but the factors causing those delays have been gradually identified. I would like to add that the intense work carried out by the Council and MINUSMA, and related efforts of the Government, have made possible the undertaking of efforts that Council members have themselves observed. There is a need to step up that approach to continue along those lines so that while we prepare for the presidential elections, which were broadly mentioned today, the implementation of the Agreement continues without our efforts losing momentum.

The situation in the central part of the country is one of the Government's major concerns with regard to attacks by terrorist groups and incidents involving communities, as well as the lack of agro-pastoral production to ensure food security. That is why we believe that the integrated security plan for central regions, adopted in February 2017, is the ideal framework for the holistic response we are providing, with the support of our international partners.

As the Security Council prepares to adopt a draft resolution to extend the mandate of MINUSMA for one year, it is important to share with Council members the real expectations of our Government. In that connection, I will begin by addressing the support needed for the electoral process. As members know, the first round of the presidential elections is scheduled for 29 July — 45 days from now. The holding of those elections, under the required conditions of transparency and credibility, is crucial for the consolidation of democracy and the legitimacy of the institutions in our country. That is why the Government, in upholding the Bamako declaration of 3 November 2000, is requesting substantial support from MINUSMA, particularly in the areas of security and logistics.

At the same time, the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Agreement must continue. We urge MINUSMA to take measures to enable Mali to re-establish its authority over its entire territory, protect civilian populations, support the redeployment of the Administration, support the provision of basic social services to the population, strengthen cooperation with the national defence and security forces and accelerate planned support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel for its effective operationalization.

In order to enable MINUSMA to fully and properly implement its mandate, the Government of Mali requests that the capacities of that important Mission be strengthened in terms of training, logistics and operational resources. With regard to the reconfiguration of MINUSMA forces referred to in the report, the Government of the Republic of Mali expresses its preference for maintaining and strengthening the current arrangements in view of the challenges involved in organizing and securing the

presidential, legislative, regional and local elections, which run from July 2018 to August 2019. Also, the reconfiguration, as proposed, could entail, if it were implemented now, the risk of creating a security vacuum, which could jeopardize the progress achieved in the peace process and regional stability.

In that context, the most credible option is to expedite the implementation of the relevant provisions of articles 21 and 54 of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, which stipulate, inter alia, that the redeployment of the reconstituted armed and security forces shall be carried out under the leadership of the Operational Coordination Mechanism with the support of MINUSMA and that the international community is the guarantor of the scrupulous implementation of the Agreement.

The report under review indicates an increase in cases of human rights violations, including inhumane and degrading treatment, arbitrary detention and extrajudicial executions, with particular reference to the Malian defence and security forces working in the context of anti-terrorist operations. In that regard, as I have said before when addressing the Council, I would like to strongly reiterate the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Mali to respect, and ensure respect for, human rights. I reaffirm here my country's full commitment to the successful investigation of every case reported in the report. In that connection, I note that administrative and disciplinary measures have been taken with regard to military units deployed in the regions concerned, military prosecutors have been seized to clarify the reported cases and the results of those investigations will be published as soon as possible.

As I have had to emphasize before the Council, the Government of Mali, in compliance with the directives of the President of Republic, observes a zero-tolerance policy on human rights violations. We have specifically asked MINUSMA to share with us the information it has so that we can work together to ensure that all investigation processes are completed and judicial action is taken if necessary. In that regard, I welcome the Secretary-General's recognition, in paragraphs 37 and 38 of his report, that the Government has clearly reiterated its commitment to not tolerate abuses against civilians.

The Government of Mali is aware of the urgent need to make the presidential elections on 29 July as transparent and peaceful as possible. It is working to that end daily and without respite. It is in that context that a consultation framework has been set up, including the political parties of the presidential majority, the opposition and civil society. At the same time, I can assure members of the Council that the material and logistical arrangements are in place to ensure free, reliable and peaceful elections. An audit of the electoral register was conducted, which was carried out by a team from the International Organization of la Francophonie that found the register to be reliable. I would mention that the chair of the audit committee was a representative from the opposition. New voter registration cards have been printed and will be distributed in the coming days. A consensus-based revision of the electoral law was conducted and put to the vote in the National Assembly. The Malian opposition did not vote against it. That demonstrates a genuine space for dialogue and highlights efforts to ensure full inclusion in the preparations for elections and the full participation of all Malian stakeholders in the political process.

The Government will do its utmost to ensure that elections are conducted in a safe environment across the country. More than 11,000 members of the Malian defence and security forces will be deployed, in addition to our MINUSMA partners, the French Operation Barkhane force and contributions from signatory movements. We must commend and thank all our partners for the assistance that each has provided to ensure success in the upcoming elections, which will be important for peacebuilding in Mali and in the Sahel.

As the Council knows, combating terrorist groups and other transnational organized crime elements remains a priority for the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel. To that end, I again request that the Council ensure that the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel be granted a mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and predictable and permanent funding, including through the United Nations.

I would like to reiterate that the Government of Mali remains fully determined to honour its commitments in implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which, for us, is the only reference framework for a lasting settlement of the crisis and the only political endeavour that could help us rebuild national unity.

Lastly, on behalf of the Government and the people of Mali, I should like once again to pay tribute to the memory of all Malians and non-Malians alike, both military personnel and civilians, who have lost their lives in Mali.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8289

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8289th meeting
Tuesday, 19 June 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Polyanskiy	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mr. Miller

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Mladenov.

Mr. Mladenov: On behalf of the Secretary-General, I will devote my regular briefing today on the situation in the Middle East to presenting the sixth report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016). As Council members have already received the report, I will highlight some of the developments on the ground and the ongoing United Nations efforts in response. I invite Council members to note that all developments are taking place in the broader context of continued military occupation of the Palestinian territory, uncertainties about the peace process and the two-State solution, and instability and ongoing turmoil in the region.

As detailed in the report, no steps were taken during the reporting period to cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem as demanded by the resolution. Approximately 3,500 housing units in settlements in Area C of the occupied West Bank were advanced, approved or tendered. One-third of those units are in settlements in outlying locations deep in the West Bank. Plans for 2,300 units were advanced in the approval process. Plans for 300 units reached final approval stage, and tenders were announced for approximately 900 units. As in the previous reporting period, no advancements, approvals or tenders were made in occupied East Jerusalem. Today, in fact, the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics released data on construction starts in West Bank Area C settlements during the first quarter of 2018 that saw the lowest quarterly figure in six years, that is 250 construction starts. The figure is significantly lower than the average monthly rate for 2017, which was 410 and 766 for 2016.

The reporting period also witnessed an overall increase in demolitions across Area C as compared to the previous period, albeit at the relatively low rate that has characterized the past year. The authorities demolished or seized at least 84 Palestinian-owned structures, resulting in the displacement of approximately 67 people and potentially affected the livelihoods of 4,500 others. I reiterate that all settlement activity is illegal under international law. It continues to undermine the practical prospects for establishing a viable Palestinian State and erodes remaining hopes for peace. I also reiterate the call by the United Nations Coordinator for Humanitarian and Development Activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to cancel plans to demolish Khan Al Ahmar-Abu Al Helu. Not only is the community at imminent risk of demolition, and displacement, but it also sets a significant precedent that may affect other Bedouin and herder communities in Area C.

The reporting period was characterized by high levels of violence, including rocket attacks from Gaza, as made clear in my recent briefings to the Council on 26 April (see S/PV.8244) and subsequently on 15 (see S/PV.8256), 23 (see S/PV.8265) and 30 May (see S/PV.8272). Since 30 March, during a series of protests in Gaza, 135 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli security forces. Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad have acknowledged that a number of their members were among those killed. Two Israeli soldiers were also injured during the protests, with at least five other people lightly injured as a result of rockets and mortars launched from Gaza. Under the cover of the protests, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other militants have engaged in violent and provocative acts. Hundreds have approached and attempted to breach the fence, burned tires, thrown rocks and fire bombs at Israeli forces, launched incendiary kites and laid improvised explosive devices at the fence. Palestinian protesters also have damaged and looted equipment and installations on the Gaza side of the border at the Kerem Shalom crossing.

We have extensively reported and underlined to the Council the respective responsibilities of parties involved in the latest round of violence. I want to again reiterate the call by the Secretary-General on all to unequivocally condemn in the strongest possible terms all actions that have brought us to this dangerous place

and led to the loss of so many lives in Gaza. Israel has a duty to protect its citizens, but it must do so while exercising maximum restraint in the use of live fire and not use lethal force except as a last resort against the imminent threat of death or serious injury. The actions of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other groups in Gaza put at risk not only the lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike, but also efforts to ensure a livable future for the people of Gaza. They must prevent the launching of rockets and breaching of the fence.

The prevailing lack of decisive steps towards the return of the legitimate Palestinian Government to Gaza, despite Egypt's best efforts to revive the process, is detrimental to Palestinian aspirations to statehood, contributes to the worsening of the humanitarian crisis and risks escalation. Furthermore, the recommendation by the Palestinian National Council to suspend key elements of the Oslo Accords, if implemented, would add to negative trends, thereby making a return to meaningful negotiations even more difficult. Last week, thousands of Palestinians demonstrated in Ramallah in solidarity with Gaza and its residents, while demanding an end to the measures imposed by the Palestinian Authority on Gaza and to the political division and lifting the debilitating closures. Palestinians have a right to freely express themselves, and the Palestinian Government has the responsibility to guarantee their exercise of that right in accordance with the basic law and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Palestine acceded in April 2014. Unfortunately, on 13 June, Palestinian security forces prevented media from covering the protests and used tear gas and stun grenades to disperse protestors, while injuring and arresting dozens of protestors.

The reporting period also included several notable prosecutions by Israeli authorities of Palestinians and Israelis for membership in so-called terrorist cells. On 29 March, an Israeli court convicted an Israeli national of membership in a terrorist organization and participating in a price-tag attack against Palestinians. On 1 May, three Palestinians were indicted for planning shooting attacks in the West Bank under the guidance and sponsorship of Hamas. On 27 May, indictments were filed against Palestinians suspected of membership of a cell planning attacks against high-level targets, and, on 17 June, suspected Palestinian members of another cell, reportedly operated by Hamas, were indicted for preparing large bombing and suicide attacks in Israeli cities.

Provocation, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric continued during the reporting period. On 30 April, during his opening speech at the Palestinian National Council, President Abbas made a series of anti-Semitic statements, which were widely condemned by the international community. At the height of the Gaza protests, a senior Hamas official called on protestors to "take down the border and tear out their Israelis hearts", which was one of several public calls by Hamas leaders inciting protestors to violence, including on social media. Meanwhile, Fatah's official social media pages continued to glorify the perpetrators of past terror attacks. Israeli officials also made provocative statements, including calls for the annexation of settlements, while denying that the Palestinian territories were occupied and openly rejecting the Palestinian right to statehood.

I continue to engage with all sides to advance proposals previously outlined in the Council that would consider prioritizing projects agreed for Gaza over the past years by the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of International Assistance to Palestinians, enhance project management capacity on the ground, and strengthen coordination with Israeli, Palestinian, and Egyptian authorities. I would like to reiterate my appreciation to all counterparts for the goodwill and cooperation demonstrated thus far. Gaza remains an integral part of the future Palestinian State. I welcome Egypt's decision to open the Rafah border crossing, which has enabled approximately 14,000 Palestinians to enter Egypt, and over 3,300 to return to Gaza, and I hope that the security situation in Sinai will allow for the opening to be sustained. I also take this opportunity to reiterate my call on Hamas to provide comprehensive information pertaining to the Israeli nationals who have been held in Gaza, as required by international humanitarian law.

Facing an unprecedented shortfall of more than $250 million, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is weeks away from painful cuts to its emergency assistance for Gaza and elsewhere in the region. In Gaza itself, that would include a deferral of salaries to some members of its workforce in July and initiating the suspension of core operations in August. UNRWA and its stakeholders are making every effort to ensure that essential operations continue. To that end, a pledging conference will be held here in New York on 25 June.

In closing, I remain greatly concerned by the state of our collective efforts to advance peace, and I reaffirm the commitment of the United Nations to the Middle East Quartet, which remains the pre-eminent forum for discussing perspectives for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Given the interconnected nature of conflicts throughout the region and the iconic nature of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that can feed extremist narratives, creating the conditions for the parties to return to meaningful negotiations remains critical.

The Secretary-General has consistently spoken out against unilateral measures, which jeopardize the prospect of peace. In resolution 2334 (2016), the Security Council also underlined that it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations. The need to reverse, or at the very least contain, the impact of negative trends, especially illegal settlement activity, violence and incitement, is critical not only to preserving hope for a meaningful return to the negotiating table, but also to preventing the escalation of broader regional tensions. I urge key regional and international partners to re-engage and remain steadfast in the pursuit of ending the occupation and realizing the two-State solution in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions and previous agreements.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Mladenov for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8290

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8290th meeting

Wednesday, 20 June 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Kuzmin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mrs. Dickson
	United States of America	Mr. Simonoff

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Prosecutor Bensouda.

Ms. Bensouda: I would like to begin by congratulating the Russian Federation on assuming the presidency of the Security Council, and to wish you, Sir, every success in steering the important work of this organ throughout the month of June.

It has been over 13 years since the Council referred the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and directed me to report to it every six months on actions taken and progress made pursuant to resolution 1593 (2005). After 13 years and 27 reports, the victims of the grave crimes that prompted the Security Council to refer the situation in Darfur to the ICC have yet to see those alleged to be most responsible for such crimes face justice. The question begs asking — how many more years and how many more reports will be required for the Council to be galvanized into taking tangible action? How much longer should victims of the alleged atrocity crimes in Darfur suffer in silence or wait to have their torment acknowledged through concrete results?

The Security Council has an important role to play in supporting the effective implementation of its own resolution — resolution 1593 (2005) — which referred the Darfur situation to the Court. In paragraph 2 of the resolution, the Council decided that the Government of the Sudan and all other parties to the conflict in Darfur shall cooperate fully with and provide any necessary assistance to the Court and the Prosecutor. Regrettably, the Government of the Sudan has not only refused to cooperate with the Court, in clear violation of the Council's resolution, but has rather been emboldened to publicly denounce the Court in this forum. It does so repeatedly, with facile and baseless allegations aimed at creating a distraction from the real issues and the Government's failure to fulfil its responsibilities and obligations. It is also regrettable that such intransigence has been presented in this Chamber, where respectful discourse is to govern all interventions, focused on finding real solutions to the serious issues of which this organ is seized.

The eyes of the world are upon us; the eyes of victims and victims' groups in Darfur, some of whom are present today, are upon us. They are owed at least this minimum decorum, and they deserve not to not have their ordeals undermined by rhetoric aimed at confusing the issues and distracting the Council's and the world's attention from what we are really concerned with here — the need to ensure that there is accountability for the serious and destabilizing crimes under the Rome Statute committed in Darfur through the Court's independent judicial process.

Today, I want to use this opportunity to reassure the victims in Darfur that my Office has neither forgotten nor abandoned them. Despite the many challenges we face, my Office continues to do all within its power and means to ensure that alleged perpetrators against whom ICC warrants have been issued will face justice in Court.

The ICC is a permanent judicial institution and it is here to stay. The evidence collected to date as part of our Darfur investigations, thanks to the assistance and commitment of victims and witnesses, and often at great risk, has persuaded the judges of the Court to issue warrants of arrest against five suspects. My Office continues to collect more evidence. Considerable progress has been made in this regard, thanks to the cooperation of a number of States and the sacrifices that many continue to make to help us solidify our cases towards the aim of being trial-ready. What is required now is for the Council and the international community at large to support the apprehension and transfer of ICC suspects to the Court so that they can answer the charges against them through a fair, independent and objective judicial process.

Let me be clear. The effective power to arrest and surrender ICC suspects in the Darfur situation

rests solely with States. The Council also plays a vital role in ensuring that these obligations are honoured. I once again urge the Council to take concrete action concerning States referred to it by the Court following failures by such States to arrest and surrender ICC suspects in the Darfur situation while such suspects are on their territory. I am encouraged by the efforts that a number of members of the Council, including permanent members, continue to make to break the impasse. These efforts include proposals for potential responses on the part of the Council to the referrals it receives and public calls on States, including the Sudan, to cooperate with the Court to execute outstanding arrest warrants. This ongoing support for the work of the Office by individual members of the Council is greatly valued.

As mentioned, there are today five persons in the Darfur situation subject to outstanding warrants of arrest: officials of the Government of the Republic of the Sudan Mr. Omar Al-Bashir, Mr. Ahmad Harun and Mr. Abdel Hussein; militia leader Mr. Ali Kushayb; and rebel leader Mr. Abdallah Banda. All are presently at large. These fugitives stand accused of multiple crimes against humanity and war crimes. These alleged atrocities include the widespread rape and sexual assault of women and girls; attacks on civilians and forcible expulsion from their homes; and detention, torture and summary executions of men detained by Janjaweed and the Sudanese army. It is also alleged that in 2007, personnel of an African Union peacekeeping operation in Darfur were attacked and murdered at their Haskanita base by rebel forces under the command of Mr. Banda. These are all serious crimes of great concern that must be addressed.

Following the Council's referral, the Office's investigation and application for warrants of arrest and the Pre-Trial Chambers' issuance of these warrants, there are now two main areas of focus in the Darfur situation: first, the Office's efforts to advance its investigations, and secondly, the Court's collective efforts to secure the arrest and surrender of the suspects in the Darfur situation. The support of the Council is critical to each if we are to move the Darfur situation forward and achieve justice for the victims.

In relation to the Office's ongoing investigations, during the reporting period the efforts of my team of lawyers, investigators and analysts resulted in important advancements in the cases against the Darfur suspects. Additional witnesses have been interviewed and a significant number of leads developed. However, despite this progress, additional funding is required to allow the team to increase the pace and breadth of its investigations. For this reason, I must respectfully repeat my request to the Council to facilitate financial support from the United Nations for the Office's investigations in the Darfur situation, as envisaged under article 115 (b) of the Rome Statute.

My report also makes clear that during the reporting period, the team's ongoing investigations benefited from the cooperation of over 20 States parties. My Office is immensely grateful for this support. Regrettably, however, the Sudan and a number of States parties do not cooperate with my Office in the Darfur situation. I therefore repeat my request to the Council to take steps to facilitate dialogue between my Office and the Government of the Sudan. I also repeat my invitation to the Government of the Sudan to constructively engage with my Office, including in particular to discuss future investigative missions by the Office to Darfur.

My report further provides an overview of the current ongoing litigation before the Court relating to States parties that failed to arrest and surrender Mr. Al-Bashir while he was on their territory. In relation to the Republic of Uganda and the Republic of Chad, Pre-Trial Chamber II has initiated proceedings pursuant to article 87.7 of the Rome Statute in relation to the failures of those State parties to arrest and surrender Mr Al-Bashir during official visits on 14 November 2017 and 1 and 2 December 2017, respectively. Both Uganda and Chad were previously referred by Pre-Trial Chambers of the Court to the Council for past failures to arrest and surrender Mr. Al-Bashir — Uganda in 2016 and Chad in 2011 and 2013. No action in relation to these or any other referrals by Pre-Trial Chambers to the Council, has been taken. This situation, I respectfully submit, is untenable and the Council must increasingly assume its responsibility to take appropriate action following a notification by the Court of non-compliant States. Proceedings are also ongoing regarding Jordan's failure to arrest and surrender Mr. Al-Bashir in March 2017.

I must emphasize that the Pre-Trial Chambers of the Court have developed a body of jurisprudence that clarifies the obligations of States parties under the Rome Statute. The Council will recall that Pre-Trial Chamber II of the Court made a decision in December 2017 to find the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in non-compliance with its obligation to arrest and surrender Mr. Al-Bashir during a visit on 29 March 2017, and to refer the matter

to the Council and the Assembly of States Parties. That decision again made clear that Mr. Al-Bashir's official status did not justify a failure by a State party to arrest and surrender a suspect subject to an ICC arrest warrant. Jordan appealed that decision and the Court's Appeals Chamber is now seized of the question.

The Appeals Chamber has scheduled a hearing for 10, 11 and 12 September 2018. In advance of that hearing, on the basis that the legal issues in the appeal may have broader implications, the Appeals Chamber has invited the relevant parties to make submissions that may assist in its determination of the legal issues raised in Jordan's appeal. In response to an invitation by the Appeals Chamber to States parties and professors of international law, the United Mexican States and 16 law professors were granted permission to submit legal observations. The Appeals Chamber also invited the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of American States to submit observations on the legal issues in the appeal by 16 July.

I am particularly encouraged by the fact that the African Union recently notified the Appeals Chamber of its acceptance of the invitation to submit observations. The participation of the African Union in the process is very important, not least because, as the African Union observed in its notification to the Appeals Chamber, 33 of the 55 African Union States members are also parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The issue of official immunities in relation to persons subject to ICC warrants of arrests was discussed at the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa on 28 and 29 January. I am also aware that various follow-up initiatives are being considered by the African Union. In that context, I commend the African Union for taking the opportunity to constructively engage with the Appeals Chamber on this important issue.

The Appeals Chamber also invited the Sudan and Mr. Al-Bashir to file submissions, by 16 July, on the merits of the legal questions raised in Jordan's appeal. It is important for the Appeals Chamber to hear and consider the views of all interested parties before its final determination on the issue.

All the relevant stakeholders in the matter have an opportunity to express their viewpoints to the Appeals Chamber. I am hopeful that they will each do so, including the Security Council via the United Nations, and thereby participate in a process that will result in a final determination of this critical issue.

My Office would be remiss not to recognize and appreciate the continued progress towards stability in Darfur. I commend the efforts of all those involved in the Darfur peace process, led by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and supported by the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

Despite that progress, as my report makes clear, intermitent violence in Darfur continued during the reporting period. A number of clashes were reported between forces of the Government of the Sudan and various rebel groups in the Jebel Marra area. In addition, there were reported attacks by Rapid Support Forces and militiamen during March and April on villages located in Jebel Marra. The clashes and attacks reportedly resulted in tens of thousands of additional internally displaced persons.

My report notes the 1 February report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which stated that, according to the Government of the Sudan, there had been a substantial decrease in the overall number of internally displaced persons from Darfur and that hundreds of thousands were returning to their homes. I note that OCHA indicated that it is verifying the numbers of returning internally displaced persons. As stated in my previous report, the Office echoes the Council's view expressed in its resolution 2363 (2017) that any return should be safe, voluntary and in accordance with applicable international law.

Sustainable peace and stability can return to Darfur only once the root causes of conflict are addressed. That includes ending impunity for alleged crimes under the Rome Statute in Darfur and ensuring accountability for the victims of those serious crimes. The collective efforts aimed at ensuring such accountability, which I outlined in my report, will go on. My Office will continue to play its role, together with the other organs of the Court and the international community at large. I appeal to the courageous women and men who are victims of the past and ongoing crimes in Darfur not to despair but to bear with us and continue to cooperate with our ongoing investigations.

Today I ask the Council, as the organ that began the process of accountability for Rome Statute crimes in Darfur, to more actively play its part in these collective

efforts — and in particular to show its support for my Office's investigations by facilitating United Nations funding and taking steps to ensure that my Office obtains the cooperation it needs, including from the Sudan.

Finally, I respectfully request the Council to provide its support to secure the arrest and surrender of the Darfur suspects. That is a prerequisite for justice being done for the thousands of victims in the Darfur situation, and a vital next step in the process that the Council started with its referral of the Darfur situation to my Office.

In addition to falling short of adequately responding to the legitimate calls of victims for justice, the status quo will not only erode public confidence in the cause of international criminal justice in Darfur, but also in the Council itself. We must work together more effectively, within our respective mandates, to ensure full implementation of, and compliance with, resolution 1593 (2005). More than a decade since the Council adopted that resolution, it is past time that we did just that. We must act collectively and with resolve. My Office remains firm in its commitment and as a ready partner in that joint obligation.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Prosecutor Bensouda for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Dickson (United Kingdom): I would like to thank the Prosecutor for her twenty-seventh report on the situation in Darfur, pursuant to resolution 1593 (2005), and for her briefing today. I would also like to commend her and her staff for their hard work and dedication in the investigations.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has an important role to play in global efforts to end impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern. The United Kingdom fully supports its efforts to hold perpetrators to account and to achieve justice for victims. We understand how difficult the investigations have proven to be for the Prosecutor and her team and how disheartening that can be, but we encourage them to maintain their current level of commitment, as the victims and the witnesses deserve nothing less.

While the United Kingdom welcomes the decrease in armed conflict between Government forces and the armed opposition, we are concerned by the ongoing clashes between the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid faction and Government forces in the Jebel Marra region. Reports of villages being burned, aerial bombardmens and civilian casualties and displacements are particularly troubling. It is unacceptable that the Government of the Sudan has prevented the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and humanitarian actors from accessing areas of recent conflict. We call on the Government of the Sudan to provide unfettered access immediately.

As the security situation shows signs of improvement in some parts of Darfur, small numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are beginning to return to their areas of origin. However, many of those returns are short-lived and precarious due to localized insecurity, the occupation of lands by militias and the absence of basic services. We note that the Prosecutor's Office is highly concerned for the fate of some of those IDPs. We are also concerned that the situation is particularly perilous for female IDPs, given the ongoing prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence. The Government of the Sudan, with the support of UNAMID and international donors, must focus its efforts on creating the conditions necessary for the safe and voluntary return of all IDPs in accordance with applicable international law, as required by resolution 2363 (2017).

The continued lack of progress in the peace process is a cause for significant frustration. We urge all parties to engage meaningfully and to focus their efforts on implementing the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel road map. Linked to that, the Government must ensure the protection of fundamental human rights, including the freedom of expression and the freedom of association, in order to create an environment conducive to political dialogue and democratic reform.

In adopting resolution 1593 (2005), the Council committed to supporting the Office of the Prosecutor in its efforts to investigate the situation in Darfur. We must therefore act upon the Prosecutor's request to the Council to take effective measures to enable the Court to carry out its mandate in Darfur, in particular by asserting the need for all States to cooperate with the Office's investigations.

In that regard, the United Kingdom looks forward to the Arria Formula meeting on Security Council-International Criminal Court relations, on 6 July,

initiated by the Netherlands and sponsored by the United Kingdom and others. We encourage our fellow Member States to engage constructively with that meeting and to consider carefully what more we as a Council can do to ensure that the Court receives the necessary support. The United Kingdom joins those States which believe that the Council should consider steps that it might take to address non-compliance findings by the Court when they are referred to the Council by the Court's judges. In that connection, the United Kingdom again calls on the Government of the Sudan to fulfil its legal obligations pursuant to resolution 1593 (2005) to cooperate fully with the Court and to arrest and surrender the suspects to it without further delay.

The United Kingdom continues to be frustrated that fugitives from the Court, including President Al-Bashir, Mr. Harun and Mr. Hussein, are still travelling to certain countries unhindered. For its part, the United Kingdom will continue to raise its concerns with the relevant Governments, including through the European Union. We renew our call on all States parties to cooperate with the International Criminal Court and abide by its obligations under the Rome Statute. We also urge them to consult the Court if they feel they are unable to cooperate with it for whatever reason.

Finally, we again thank the Office of the Prosecutor for its continued commitment to pursuing these investigations and achieving justice for the victims of Darfur, despite the fragility of the security situation, access restrictions and the lack of cooperation. We urge them to continue with this important work.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of France, I sincerely thank Prosecutor Bensouda and her team for the important work they have been doing for six years in the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC). France appreciates the importance that such a mission represents for her and her team, who are engaged on a daily basis in rooting out and identifying culpability; for the victims, who await recognition and reparation; and for witnesses, who have chosen to place their trust in justice in a context that is anything but simple. That is why it is important that we steer a clear course. Our focus is on combating impunity for crimes committed in Darfur. Our biannual debate today is a clear reminder of that.

When the Security Council, in resolution 1593 (2005), referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC Prosecutor 13 years ago, it was because members were collectively convinced that they must act to ensure that no further atrocities were committed in Darfur and that there would be no reconciliation or stability in the Sudan without justice for the victims. Those objectives have not yet been achieved. It is the Council's responsibility to take resolute action to combat impunity in the Sudan and to put an end to the crimes committed in Darfur. Ensuring that justice is served is essential to any long-term stabilization in Darfur and the Sudan.

Certainly, the overall improvement in the security situation makes stabilization possible, which is an encouraging development. However, many challenges remain. That is particularly true in Jebel Marra, where people continue to suffer. France also remains concerned about the persistence of intercommunal conflicts and militia activities, which remain a major cause of concern for the populations, in particular for the most vulnerable. Too many women still fall victim to sexual violence in Darfur. We must also remain attentive to the plight of the displaced populations. There are still nearly 2 million displaced people in Darfur, for whom lasting solutions have yet to be found. That requires continued efforts to end the fighting and violence against civilians, in particular in Jebel Marra, including by reaching a cessation of hostilities agreement.

Addressing the root causes of the conflict is also essential, in particular with regard to land, access to natural resources and restoring the rule of law. It is also imperative to pursue efforts to advance the political process. In all these areas, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur plays an important role. It must continue to implement its mandate in the course of the ongoing reconfiguration. In particular, it is essential that the mission has access to areas where the protection of civilians and humanitarian access are critical, be it in Jebel Marra or elsewhere.

The fight against impunity for the most serious crimes and respect for human rights are also fundamental to achieving long-term stabilization in Darfur. In order for people who have suffered to regain confidence in their environment and return to a normal life, it is essential that the perpetrators of crimes be identified and held accountable for their actions.

France recalls once again the importance of the obligation to cooperate with the Court, in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the Council. That applies to the implementation of the arrest warrant

against President Al-Bashir and the four other suspects identified by the Court. France rejects the trivialization of non-cooperation on the part of States Members of the United Nations, especially States parties to the Rome Statute. Of course, that obligation is primarily incumbent on the Sudan, which must execute arrest warrants against its nationals for acts committed on its territory and cooperate with the Court pursuant to resolution 1593 (2005).

The judges of the International Criminal Court have repeatedly recalled the obligation of States parties to the Rome Statute to cooperate with the Court and to execute arrest warrants when the people against whom they are issued are on their territory. Therefore, France regrets that persons subject to arrest warrants have not been arrested, in defiance of resolution 1593 (2005), the Rome Statute and the decisions of the International Criminal Court.

We must fulfil the Court's legitimate requests so that it may fully carry out its mandate. We must ensure that cooperation with the ICC is effective and that arrest warrants are executed. The same applies to the implementation by the Council of its own resolutions, in particular resolution 1593 (2005). In that connection, France reiterates its proposal that States which, according to the Court, have not complied with their obligations to cooperate with the Court be invited to address the Security Council. It will then be up to the Council to determine, on the basis of that exchange of views, what action to take.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We thank Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda for her briefing, although we take strong exception to the way she has been rather flippant in setting the tone for others to follow, in that regard, when she addresses one of the most respected African leaders in our region, whose role in bringing about peace and stability in our region means so much to the peoples of our region. We know what the uproar would be like if she referred to leaders from other regions in the same way. As an African, I find this very sad. It is a double standard that we continue to be haunted by.

Ethiopia's position on the issue of the Sudan and the International Criminal Court (ICC) has been very consistent and clear. I have already given a hint concerning our narrative in that regard. It is in line with the position of the African Union, which has repeatedly called for the suspension of the proceedings against the President of the Sudan, Omar Al-Bashir, and urged the Security Council to withdraw the referral of the case in the Sudan. We continue to believe that the Council has abdicated its responsibility with regard to that matter. The withdrawal of the referral would have enormous positive implications for peace and security of our region and the mandate of the Council. We continue to believe that, given the extremely weak nature of the case, its continuation makes absolutely no sense. Increasingly available information is reinforcing our conviction in that regard. In fact, it would only damage the credibility of the Council, for the lack of action concerning the matter would not be consistent with the primary responsibility that the Council shoulders with regard to international peace and security. Most important, recent events underscore the need for the Council to seriously re-examine its position on the matter.

The Sudan has been playing a constructive role in combating terrorism, human trafficking and illicit migration, as well as dealing with other regional peace and security issues, which has been broadly acknowledged to date. It has enhanced its bilateral and multilateral cooperation and engagement on all those issues, and that has been considered very valuable under the leadership of the Sudanese President. The lifting of the bilateral economic sanctions imposed on the Sudan by the United States for the past two decades is a major positive development, which is a result of the Sudan's improved international relations.

As we have been saying for quite some time now, the situation in Darfur has continued to show marked progress. The hostilities between the Government of the Sudan and rebel forces have decreased substantially, and the security situation on the ground has improved significantly. The level of intercommunal violence has once again plummeted, and humanitarian access across Darfur continues to improve, which has been confirmed by the joint strategic review of the African Union and the United Nations that provided us with a very useful analysis of the situation in Darfur. We therefore believe that there is a need for a paradigm shift in our approach to dealing with the Darfur situation. The Sudanese Government has demonstrated its political will to sustainably address the challenges in the region. It has also exerted much effort to address the challenges that the Sudan as a whole is facing. What is expected from the international community is to intensify its efforts to assist the Government's work to alleviate the suffering of the people of Darfur.

Of course, we also recognize that much remains to be done with regard to addressing the root causes of the conflict in Darfur and ensuring long-term stability. For that reason, we call on the Government to redouble its efforts to implement all remaining tasks. The international community should also live up to its commitments, and the Council in particular should exert pressure on armed movements to negotiate seriously ending the suffering of the people in Darfur.

In the light of the positive developments that I just mentioned and the constructive role that the Sudanese Government is playing in a range of issues, it is only appropriate that the international community change its approach to dealing with the Sudan. That is why we welcomed the lifting of the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States against the Sudan. It is also high time that the Council begin seriously to consider the issue of the Sudan and the ICC.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We express our gratitude for the convening of this meeting and thank Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda for her briefing on the situation in Darfur and the valuable work that she is carrying out with her team. Pursuant to resolution 2363 (2017), Peru supports the political process in that country and action to address the root causes of the conflict and to ensure the safe return of the approximately 1.8 million internally displaced persons, among other urgent measures.

It is fitting to recall that, shortly after the Rome Statute's entry into force and the assumption of its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council demonstrated its trust in the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court for the first time by referring the situation in Darfur to it. That was a necessary step in efforts to guarantee access to justice and accountability. We therefore renew our support for the work of the Office of the Prosecutor today, but we are aware of its complex nature and that it requires the full cooperation of States, beginning with national authorities directly concerned. In that regard, it is appropriate to remind the authorities of the Government of the Republic of the Sudan of their duty to execute arrest warrants issued by the Court. Similarly, we regret that some States parties to the Rome Statute have not lived up to their obligation to cooperate with regard to the investigation and prosecution of crimes that fall under its jurisdiction and especially the obligation to detain and surrender to the Court persons subject to an arrest warrant who enter their territory. Likewise, we urge all States to act in accordance with their obligations pursuant to resolution 1593 (2005).

While instances of non-compliance with the Court's orders clearly undermine its credibility, it is also true that failure to take measures to address such situations affects the credibility of the Council. In that regard, as the non-cooperation focal point of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, Peru welcomed the New Zealand initiative of December 2016 to address that problem.

We must also remember that, while the Court is essential for preventing the most serious crimes from going unpunished, its jurisdiction is complementary to the responsibility of every State to protect its people. Similarly, cooperation with the Court should be understood as an opportunity to strengthen justice and the rule of law in domestic and international areas. That is predicated upon promoting greater confidence in legal institutions and effective deterrence. Trust in the justice system and the predictability of its response to atrocity crimes is particularly relevant for a country like the Sudan, which has been affected by conflict. Nothing justifies impunity.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight the important work being done by the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur in the exercise of its mandate in all areas of Darfur, and reaffirm our support for the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur.

Mr. Zhang Dianbin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation listened very carefully to the briefing we heard from the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Ms. Fatou Bensouda. Over the past few years, the political and security situation in Darfur and the Sudan have improved considerably, a development that has been welcomed by the international community. This is due partly to the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations as well as the international community as a whole. More important still, it is due to the efforts and the contributions of the Sudanese Government itself.

The Government of the Sudan has been working for many years now to strengthen its own capacity in the field of security and governance and to promote a political process of reconciliation, in particular over the past year, when it has engaged in an active campaign to collect weapons, which has made a major contribution to peace and stability in Darfur. We very much welcome

the progress that we have witnessed in Darfur and the efforts undertaken by the Sudanese Government itself to bring about the current situation.

The progress made in Darfur demonstrates that the Sudanese Government is entirely capable of progressively assuming and taking over its responsibilities for the maintenance of peace and stability in the region of Darfur. We hope that the international community will continue to respect the leadership of the Sudanese Government when it comes to the issue of Darfur.

We hope that the international community will also contribute effectively to peace and stability in Darfur, with a focus on capacity-building in the areas of security and governance. We also call on it to provide humanitarian and economic assistance and to stand with the Sudanese Government and help it in its efforts to promote reconciliation reconstruction in Darfur in order to ensure that all of these regions can enjoy sustainable peace and lasting development.

China's stance on the Sudanese issue with respect to the ICC remains unchanged. China hopes that the Security Council and the ICC will fully respect the sovereignty of the Sudan. They must also address the legitimate concerns of the African Union and the Sudanese Government when it comes to this issue and fully respect the views of the African Union and the League of Arab States, which cannot be ignored.

China has long been of the view that Heads of State enjoy privileges and immunities under international law by virtue of their office and that the referral of a situation by the Security Council to the ICC in no way necessarily undermines or strips the immunity enjoyed by such Heads of State.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): I wish to thank Prosecutor Bensouda for her briefing today and to assure her of our continued and full support for the efforts of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and of her Office. It is imperative that her call for the full backing of the Council and member States be positively received, respected and acted upon. For the Council, this means following through on our decisions, in this case our unanimous decision to refer the situation in Darfur to the ICC.

Regrettably, once again little has changed since the Prosecutor last briefed the Council in December 2017 (see S/PV.8132). It is particularly frustrating that all arrest warrants remain outstanding and that the suspects remain at large. We reiterate our call on the Government of the Sudan to cooperate fully with the Court, in accordance with resolution 1593 (2005). In addition, further steps by the Government of the Sudan are also needed to ensure justice for the women, men and children who have been victims of the horrendous crimes committed during the conflict in Darfur. Victims' voices must be heard.

The success of the referral of the Darfur situation to the Office of the Prosecutor continues to depend heavily on the cooperation of States, in particular States parties to the Rome Statute. In this regard, it is deeply concerning that the President of the Sudan has been able to continue to travel internationally, including to States parties to the Rome Statute, which have an obligation to cooperate with the Court in fulfilling its mandate. Like other States parties, we continue to raise the issue of non-cooperation with the relevant Governments. Without its own enforcement mechanism, the Court relies on States to fulfil its mandate, including by executing arrest warrants. As we and several other State parties have stated previously, the Council should approach cases of non-cooperation in a structured manner and, as a minimum, discuss which tools it has for an appropriate response.

Turning to the current situation in Darfur, we welcome reports that over the last six months, both the level of violence against civilians and the number of internally displaced persons have decreased. We are pleased to observe a continuing improvement in the overall situation and to see that clashes with the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid remain confined to Jebel Marra. Nonetheless, we remain concerned about reports from the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur regarding continued attacks on villages and civilians. In addition, despite the fact that the number of reported incidents of rape remained relatively low during the reporting period, sexual and gender-related violence remains a serious problem in Darfur.

We agree with Prosecutor Bensouda that for a lasting peace in Darfur to be achieved, the root causes of the conflict must be recognized and addressed in a holistic manner. Adequate steps to do so have yet to be put in place, for example in response to persistent poverty, gender inequality, inadequate access to social services, the adverse effects of climate change, land issues and violations and abuses of human rights.

Building effective rule-of-law institutions is a critical part of the process of addressing the remaining challenges successfully.

In conclusion, let me once again underline the significant contribution that the Court and the Office of the Prosecutor have made to ensuring accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims of serious international crimes. As supporters and as members of the international community, we have an obligation to continue to support its work, including by ensuring sufficient financial funding for the Court to be able to carry out its mandate.

Mr. Llorenty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the very informative briefing that we have heard from the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Ms. Fatou Bensouda, on her twenty-seventh report pursuant to resolution 1593 (2005).

We have taken note of the progress made in investigations as well as of the difficulties that the Office of the Prosecutor has faced in the course of investigations as well as in its judicial activities, relating to situations that hamper the fulfilment of the task entrusted to the Office by the Security Council.

The situation in Darfur triggered the first referral of a case by the Security Council to the International Criminal Court. Since then, 13 years have elapsed, and said case still languishes at the investigation stage — an investigation that, as the report indicates, faces major obstacles. The Council cannot and must not be indifferent to the fact that the investigation has dragged on for more than a decade. The time that has passed makes it harder to shed light on the crimes committed and to attribute responsibility.

Bolivia believes that those who have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity must answer to the courts. There can be no denying that this is an important element for consolidating peace in Darfur. In voicing our support for the work of the International Criminal Court, we wish to recall that when the Security Council referred the situation in Darfur to the Court in resolution 1593 (2005), it not only activated the jurisdiction of the Court with respect to trying persons but also urged it to support the promotion of the rule of law, the safeguarding of human rights and the fight against impunity, while underscoring the non-jurisdictional activities of the ICC such as the promotion of peace, reconciliation and institution-building.

Against that backdrop, we encourage the Office of the Prosecutor to include, in its next report to the Security Council, details on the activities undertaken by the Court to promote the strengthening of judicial organs and institutions in the Sudan, now that the priority is the consolidation of sustainable peace in Darfur.

We also urge the Court to join in the efforts of the international community, particularly regional organizations, to strengthen political processes in the Sudan, particularly those related to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. We believe that, as indicated in resolution 1593 (2005), cooperation and coordination between the Court and the African Union are crucial. The commitment of that regional organization to fighting impunity is undeniable, as set out in its Constitutive Act. In addition, we recall that the African Union set up a ministerial committee to address issues related to the case. In that context, we call for the establishment of constructive dialogue to facilitate the necessary work and strengthens trust between both institutions.

Over the past years, we have seen positive developments in the Sudan, as mentioned in the recent strategic review (see S/2018/530) of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), which affirms a general improvement in the security situation in Darfur and increased cooperation between the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations to facilitate UNAMID's work on the ground. Bolivia believes that it was possible to reach such a point primarily thanks to the joint work of the African Union, the United Nations and the Government of the Sudan. All such efforts should continue, with a focus on strengthening peace in Darfur.

It is important to highlight that the development and the future of international criminal justice are closely linked to the concepts of the cooperation and complementarity of States. The International Criminal Court is a complementary court to the primary and sovereign capacities of each State to administer justice in its territory. In addition to achieving effective and timely prosecutions, it is therefore necessary to re-establish local capacities. That demonstrates that it is now necessary to carefully review the case of Darfur. We reaffirm that the International Criminal Court is a global undertaking of interest to all States and that its mission is intrinsically linked to the strengthening

of international criminal justice, peace, security and respect for human rights and to ensuring due process.

In that context, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute, we must take this opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of the Court and on whether the model developed meets the expectations of cooperation and universality. The Security Council and the membership of the United Nations in general must take stock of the cost of the International Criminal Court in pursuing investigations and trials within its competence Moreover, when we see that various States, including members of the Security Council, are still not a State party to the Rome Statute. For that same reason, the debate on the impunity enjoyed by many of those responsible for crimes against humanity or war crimes undermines the relative capacity of the Court and, at the same time, weakens the effectiveness of its work. We stress the point that we cannot continue a frank dialogue while such countries do not meet their own international obligations.

Bolivia fulfils its obligations as a State party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and supports efforts in the pursuit to justice in fighting impunity. We therefore urge all States that have not yet done so to ratify the Rome Statute in order to ensure its universal jurisdiction. To that end, we believe that the value of the principle of universality of the International Criminal Court is vital.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, on behalf of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the Russian Federation's second victory in the World Cup football championship this morning.

We would like to welcome and thank Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda for her briefing on the twenty-seventh report on the situation in Darfur in accordance with resolution 1593 (2005). We appreciate the work of the Prosecutor, as well as the report that she has just presented to us.

As we have already reiterated on many occasions before the Chamber, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is a State that supports respect for international law and international humanitarian law. That is why we commend the great efforts of the Security Council to fight impunity for serious crimes and to promote the principles of justice and responsibility, as well as to demand accountability of all those responsible for war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity and other related crimes, as well as its unremitting effort to establish institutions or methods to deal with such evils.

However, with regard to the International Criminal Court, we would like to point out that we adhere to all the declarations and resolutions issued by the African Union on the way in which the Court deals with some African issues, in particular concerning the proceedings against the President of the Sudan, Mr. Omar Al-Bashir. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea believes that the International Criminal Court has no jurisdiction to charge a President of the Republic, in full discharge of his duties, given the fact that, as the symbol of national sovereignty, he enjoys immunity. International law on the immunity of senior State officials must be respected. The required cooperation by the Office of the President and the Court is being diminished by the lack of credibility of that judicial institution as a result of its inability to meet its responsibilities in an efficient, honest and transparent way. It is not by chance that several countries, including countries that are party to the Rome Statute, have not cooperated in the arrest and detention of President Omar Al-Bashir on account of their not sharing the interpretation of the Court with regard to immunity.

The fact that so many years have passed without the Court being able to make progress in that case clearly demonstrates the absence of grounds. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea therefore shares the position of the African Union with regard to the International Criminal Court's action concerning Darfur. Accordingly, we join the repeated request of the African Union for the suspension of proceedings against the President of the Sudan, Mr. Omar Al-Bashir, and the withdrawal of the referral of the case.

Meanwhile, Equatorial Guinea welcomes the positive political developments in Darfur, thereby improving the security and stability of the country. Under the leadership of President Al-Bashir, the Sudan plays a very active and positive role in combating sectarian violence and terrorism, which is already having encouraging results on the ground.

In accordance with the principles of responsibility and justice, like the African Union, which is calling for the restoration of peace and justice in Darfur, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is fully convinced that dialogue and national reconciliation, in line with the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, are basic elements

for achieving a proper solution to the problems in the Sudan and a broad and lasting peace. The actions of the international community should support that momentum and not hinder it.

I will conclude by encouraging the Government of the Sudan to continue to make every effort to uphold calm and respect for international humanitarian law and human rights for all parts of the population under its sovereignty, as well as to maintain the positive momentum and to strengthen its cooperation with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations country team in the country in order to achieve peace and prosperity for the entire Sudanese population.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to welcome Ms. Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC). We take note of her briefing on the ICC twenty-seventh report on the Sudan.

The State of Kuwait, in its capacity as the Arab member in the Security Council, recalls the 514th resolution adopted at the twenty-second Arab Summit in Sirte, in 2010. The resolution represents the Arab position vis-à-vis the proceedings of the ICC against the President of the Republic of the Sudan, a position that rejects the politicization of the principles of international justice and their use to challenge the sovereignty, unity and stability of States under the guise of international criminal justice. The Arab position underscores the need to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the Sudan. That is challenged by the ICC decision, which is considered to be a precedent against a sitting Head of State, enjoying immunity as provided for heads of states by international law. The decision of the ICC did not gain the support of regional organizations to which the Sudan is party, such as the League of Arab States, the African Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. All these organizations are part of the international labour organizations, as set forth in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. It is of vital importance to ensure coherence and harmony in their work, as well as in the work of other international organizations, such as the ICC.

The Secretary-General's report on the situation in Darfur (S/2018/530), issued last month, demonstrated the significant reduction in intercommunal conflict and the continued efforts by the Government of the Sudan to extend the ceasefire and achieve continued progress in the weapons collection campaign, as well as a significant reduction in the crime rate. The twenty-seventh report of the Prosecutor, which is before us, also welcomes the continued stability of the security situation in Darfur.

Therefore, when the Security Council addresses the issue of Darfur, it must do so in a comprehensive and coherent manner in order to assist the efforts of the Government of the Sudan to build peace and remove any obstacles to peace, as called for in relevant Security Council resolutions. Accordingly, we hope that the ICC proceedings will not become an obstacle to achieving peace in the Sudan. That is the noble objective of the entire international community, especially in the light of the positive, tangible developments that we have all witnessed in Darfur, a region that has moved away from the hardest phase of conflict towards building peace.

In conclusion, we renew our commitment to respecting the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations on that matter, including respect for State sovereignty. We reaffirm the importance of respecting the sovereignty and independence of the Sudan.

Mr. Simonoff (United States of America): I would like to thank the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Ms. Fatou Bensouda, for her briefing.

The United States strongly supports justice and accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Although the best way to promote accountability for such atrocities may depend on the circumstances, the United States will always believe that victims, including the victims in Darfur, deserve justice. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed during the conflict in Darfur, with more than 2 million remaining internally displaced and 5 million negatively affected since the onset of the conflict. Although there are now fewer reports of civilian displacement across Darfur, internally displaced persons (IDPs) still cannot safely return home and risk attacks when they leave IDP camps. As the 21-23 May attacks by the Sudan's Rapid Support Forces on three separate IDP camps demonstrated, even IDPs who stay within camp boundaries face substantial risks.

The United States is troubled by the resurgence of violence in Jebel Marra in April and May, which resulted in injuries and deaths of civilians, including children, the destruction of homes and food, and the displacement

of 9,000 people. We also remain concerned by violence, including intercommunal violence, in other areas of Darfur outside of Jebel Marra, and the lack of access in various parts of Darfur afforded to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Of particular concern are the increasing reports of a potentially calamitous harvest failure across the Sudan in October because of the ongoing economic and fuel crises, which might contribute to a return to a return to large-scale conflict and conflict-related atrocities as conditions become more unstable and people become desperate for resources.

We call on the Sudanese Government to show restraint and to allow UNAMID, the United Nations country team, humanitarian organizations and the media unfettered access to the areas where violence has taken place and where communities remain vulnerable to violence so that they can investigate these troubling reports, monitor current needs and conditions, and provide assistance to those in need.

It is shameful that sexual violence, including such violence committed by personnel in military attire and Rapid Support Forces uniforms, remains prevalent in Darfur and that the Sudanese Government often denies that this violence is taking place, despite clear evidence to the contrary. As the United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict has noted, conflict-related sexual violence against children has increased recently and cases of conflict-related sexual violence in Darfur go uninvestigated. That deterioration and the lack of accountability are unacceptable.

The culture of impunity that continues to surround those atrocities, in particular those involving sexual violence, must end. With hopes that peace could return to Darfur, the United States included ceasing military offensive and aerial bombardments in Darfur and the two areas as a key component of the five-track engagement plan that we launched with the Sudan in June 2016. We are pleased that the Government of the Sudan made some progress under that framework, including ceasing military offensive and aerial bombardments, during that period. However, much more progress is needed. We are determined to remain engaged as we work to develop a phase-two follow-up engagement plan, which will aim for improved respect for human rights and religious freedom, a sustainable end to internal conflicts and improvement in humanitarian access, among other priority objectives.

To achieve stable and lasting peace in Darfur, justice and accountability are essential. Those responsible for human rights violations and abuses in Darfur, including by targeting civilians, must be held accountable. That includes allegations that official security forces use excessive force against civilians and that members of armed militias perpetrate atrocities against civilians in Darfur. We welcome the arrest by the Sudanese Government of former Janjaweed commander Musa Hilal, who is subject to United Nations sanctions for his commission of atrocities in Darfur following clashes between the Sudanese security forces and our militia, loyal to Hilal.

However, we are concerned about the lack of transparency around Hilal's military trial and the charges he faces. We call on the Government to investigate promptly and credibly all allegations against Hilal, including those related to atrocities, in accordance with the Sudan's human rights commitments and obligations, and to hold Hilal to account if he is found to have committed violations.

The United States has noted for many years that it is unacceptable that the suspects in the Darfur situation have not been brought to justice and remain at large. In particular, we have expressed disappointment that Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir continues to travel around the world. His being received on such visits has served only to diminish the seriousness of the charges against him and to compound the tremendous suffering of the victims. Regardless of the power wielded by those who are responsible for violations and abuses, we must stand with the victims as we have in the past. For example, in Cambodia and Sierra Leone, where leaders have in the past committed atrocities against their own citizens, they have been called to answer for their alleged crimes.

Moving forward, we will use all appropriate tools at our disposal to press the Sudan to improve its human rights practices, protect fundamental freedoms and promote justice for the people of Darfur. A Sudan that adheres to the rule of law, respects human rights, allows unfettered humanitarian access to all populations in need and breaks the cycle of impunity is one that will enjoy sustainable peace and prosper. We look forward to the day when the Sudan is a demonstrable proponent of human rights.

In conclusion, I would reiterate the concerns of the United States about the ICC's activities with respect to

the situation in Afghanistan, which is different from the current situation in many ways. We continue to have a long-standing and principled objection to any ICC investigation or other activity concerning United States personnel, absent United States consent or Security Council referral.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to echo the congratulations offered by the representative of Equatorial Guinea on the victory of Russia's football team and wish the team continued success.

We are pleased that Mr. Iliichev is present at today's meeting. He is the Director of the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia and a long-time friend of the Security Council.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to thank the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Ms. Fatou Bensouda, for her semi-annual briefing to the Council and for her efforts to uphold international rule of law, justice, transparency and accountability. I also welcome His Excellency Ambassador Omer Dahab Fadl Mohamed, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Sudan, to the Chamber.

We took note of the twenty-seventh report of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court pursuant to resolution 1593 (2005) and would like to make the following observations.

Kazakhstan welcomes Khartoum's commitment to stability in Darfur and to strengthened cooperation with the United Nations and the African Union (AU). Such efforts have resulted in the continuing improvement in the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur, an overall reduction in intercommunal clashes and the consolidation of Government authority throughout the area. Our delegation believes that those positive results would not have been achieved without respect for the national ownership, sovereignty and independence of the Sudan. We encourage the Government of the Sudan to maintain that positive momentum and to continue to work diligently with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations country team to advance the peace process, address the root causes of the conflict and achieve peace and prosperity for the entire Sudanese population.

Kazakhstan is confident that constructive and inclusive dialogue, in accordance with the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, is the only way to establish peace and stability in Darfur. We encourage the Court to join regional and international efforts to reach the objectives of the Doha Document by supporting the Sudan's capacity to promote the rule of law, address impunity and protect human rights.

In conclusion, as a member-observer of the African Union, Kazakhstan underscores the critical role of the AU in resolving the crisis in Darfur and its return to peace and justice. We therefore suggest that the Court take into consideration the unified position of the African Union and establish dialogue with the Open-ended Ministerial Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs on the ICC.

Lastly, we believe that our joint efforts and mutual trust among all parties and institutions will definitely lead to a stable, peaceful and prosperous Sudan.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): At the outset, let me take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the work of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and that of her Office, and her commitment to continuing to advance the cause of international justice. As mentioned by the Prosecutor, justice, including ending impunity and providing accountability, continues to play an important role in addressing the root causes of conflict and is key to ensuring long-term stability.

Both the report and the briefing by the Prosecutor highlight that the States Members of the United Nations must cooperate with the Court and underscore the importance of the support of the Security Council and other stakeholders for the mandate of the Office of the Prosecutor. We note the Office's observation that reported violence against civilians in Darfur appears to have decreased slightly, as compared to the previous reporting period, but we remain concerned about the accounts of clashes, attacks on villages and aerial bombardment in the Jebel Marra area, as well as the consequences of such actions, including casualties among civilians, their further displacement and the destruction of their homes.

Notwithstanding the decrease in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Darfur, the problem still exists and requires our close attention and an appropriate solution. In that regard, and in the context of the authorities' decision to close all IDP camps by

the end of the year, we note that resolution 2363 (2017) stresses that any return should be safe, voluntary and in accordance with applicable international law. In other words, due to the limited level of access to health care, schools and work in the areas of concern, any forced return should be prevented.

The volatile human rights situation in Darfur is also cause for great concern. Sexual and gender-based violence must be closely monitored and prevented. Persons in vulnerable situations in particular, including women and girls, must be protected. Furthermore, despite the release of some detainees, reported arbitrary arrests and detentions require scrutiny and review.

The discussed withdrawal of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur must be compensated by an increased presence of the United Nations country team and closer cooperation among relevant stakeholders. Increased efforts by the authorities to provide security, promote intercommunal reconciliation and deal with the root causes of the conflict are crucial. The adoption and implementation of an agreement on the cessation of hostilities by the Government and armed movements, as well as the full implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, are equally important. We cannot forget the importance of the international community's support for the peace process and the development of the region.

Poland supports the ICC and the Office of Prosecutor Bensouda in ensuring accountability and achieving justice for the victims. We endorse the Office's request that the Council take effective measures to enable the Court to carry out its mandate in Darfur. As identified in the report, such measures may include adopting a persuasive course of action against States that were referred to the Council by the Court in its non-compliance decisions and related referrals, facilitating financial assistance from the United Nations and effectively encouraging all States to cooperate with the Office's investigations.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to thank the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Ms. Fatou Bensouda, for her semi-annual briefing on the activities of the Court with regard to the situation in Darfur. As a State party to the Rome Statute Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its full support for the efforts of the International Criminal Court to promote international justice and combat impunity both in Darfur and the rest of the world.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the situation of peace and relative stability in the Darfur region, after several years of crisis. We call on the international community to work towards consolidating the progress made. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire supports the ongoing political process and encourages the Government of the Sudan to redouble its efforts to further address the root causes of conflict to achieve lasting peace and stability.

Côte d'Ivoire remains firmly committed to respecting human rights. We believe that the fight against impunity is an important aspect of the national reconciliation process and that the quest for lasting peace in Darfur remains dependent upon accountability for those who are guilty of committing serious crimes and human rights violations. In that regard, my delegation reiterates its appreciation for the efforts of the Office of the Prosecutor to address that need for justice.

We encourage the Sudanese authorities, in the context of enhanced cooperation with the Office of the Prosecutor, to provide an adequate response to the concerns expressed, in particular with regard to clarifying the allegations of human rights violations and bringing to justice those responsible for such violations and other atrocious crimes committed during the conflict in Darfur.

As highlighted in the special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations (S/2018/530) on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, published on 1 June, despite the efforts of the Government of the Sudan to re-establish authority over Darfur as a whole, weak institutional capacity and the lack of financial resources have a negative impact on the establishment of rule of law, justice and security institutions.

According to the same report, attacks against civilians, including sexual and gender-based violence, continue in Darfur, despite the efforts of the Government of the Sudan to establish the rule of law. Côte d'Ivoire therefore encourages the international community to assist in the establishment of strong institutions capable of meeting the challenge of establishing the rule of law in Darfur.

Côte d'Ivoire would like to commend the Government of the Sudan for the significant progress made in improving the security situation and stability in Darfur. We note with satisfaction the incorporation of that progress in the reorientation of United Nations

work towards peacebuilding, development and recovery activities, with the exception of the Jebel Marra area.

The lifting of various sanctions imposed on the Sudan by certain States and the improvement in the sociopolitical situation in Darfur constitute positive developments that contribute to amplifying the peace and development dynamics under way.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its support for the actions of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in cases relating to the situation in Darfur and calls upon the international community to support the efforts of the Sudanese Government to definitively restore peace and stability to that region.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): Let me to join others in welcoming the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to the Security Council. We express our sincere gratitude to Ms. Fatou Bensouda for her briefing and report. We also pay tribute to the Prosecutor and her Office for their tremendous efforts and leadership in a sometimes difficult context. The Kingdom of the Netherlands reiterates its full support for the International Criminal Court. The city of The Hague is its proud host.

The ICC is the principal institution created to strengthen international rule of law by bringing to justice those responsible for gross human rights violations and international crimes. In that sense, the ICC plays a crucial role in the Security Council's efforts to promote peace and security in Darfur. I will address three issues today: first, the outstanding arrest warrants; secondly, accountability; and, thirdly, the need for cooperation with the Court.

First, with respect to the outstanding arrest warrants, 13 years ago, the Council adopted resolution 1593 (2005), which referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC. The Kingdom of the Netherlands deplores the fact that all suspects of the Darfur situation still remain at large. Let us not forget that the charges against the suspects include genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. One of the people at large, Mr. Banda, is accused of leading an attack on the African Union Mission in the Sudan, in North Darfur. Twelve peacekeepers were killed during that attack. We regret that the Government of the Sudan has not arrested all the suspects and has not brought them to The Hague.

Furthermore, we are deeply disappointed that some of the suspects, like the President, continue to travel unhindered to other States. We are even more disappointed that, when the President travelled to States parties, he was not arrested. We call upon all States to meet their obligations under resolution 1593 (2005) — all States should cooperate fully with the Court; all States should fulfil their obligations. In our view, all States should arrest and surrender all those persons against whom an arrest warrant has been issued by the ICC.

Secondly, with regard to accountability, to date there has been no accountability for victims of crimes in Darfur. I pay tribute to the fact that some victims and family members from Darfur are present here today. The Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes the recent relative decrease in violence in Darfur, but remains deeply concerned about the continued human rights violations, as well as the continued impunity. We remain alarmed by the reports of continued conflict-related sexual violence, arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial killings. The Council must ensure accountability for those and other gross human rights violations. Accountability is the only road towards sustainable peace.

Let me quote the words of the Permanent Representative of Senegal, my friend Mr. Fodé Seck, in his statement last December in the Council.

> "No peace can be built on the vestiges of impunity or failure to hold perpetrators responsible. Accountability should never be ignored" (*S/PV.8132, p. 9*).

It is the responsibility of both the Government of the Sudan and the Security Council to uphold that critical principle. International law should prevail.

Thirdly, I will address the need for cooperation with the Court. The Council referred the situation in Darfur to the ICC 13 years ago because of the atrocities committed there. Under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council decided that the Government of the Sudan must cooperate fully with the Court and the Prosecutor. The Council also urged all States and regional and international organizations to cooperate fully with the Court and the Prosecutor. The Court needs that cooperation to function effectively, as the Prosecutor made abundantly clear today. In our view, all States should therefore extend full cooperation to the Court. Only with the full cooperation can the Court

fulfil the mandate the Council gave it. Regrettably, to this day, full cooperation is not happening.

It is unacceptable that the victims of international crimes in Darfur have been waiting for more than 13 years. It is unacceptable that the victims of international crimes in Darfur are still waiting for the Council to ensure that its own decisions are adequately followed up. It is unacceptable that the victims of international crimes in Darfur are still waiting for justice.

The Council should take action when the Council concludes that States have breached their obligation to cooperate. When the Court deems that, the Council should invite non-compliant States to come to it and should decide on concrete follow-up action, and we support the suggestions related to that just made by our Polish colleague.

In conclusion, history has taught us that we cannot have lasting peace without justice, accountability or reconciliation. If we are all fully committed to that goal, we can help the victims in Darfur and their loved ones and families. They deserve justice. International law and the Charter must be upheld.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

I wanted to comment on the Prosecutor's report, but there is basically nothing to comment on. There has been zero progress in the investigations. The report, a document that in theory should deal with the Court's activity, is largely devoted to listing the international travels of the President of the Sudan, while the rest of it is stuffed with quotations from the Secretary-General's reports and verbatim transcripts of Security Council expert briefings.

One topic, however, is worthy of attention and I will consider it in more detail. The International Criminal Court (ICC) continues to call on States Members of the United Nations, including those that are not party to the Rome Statute, to arrest and turn over to the Court various subjects of its investigative activities. I am referring in particular to the arrest of the President of the Sudan based on resolution 1593 (2005). However, the resolution clearly states that States that are not party to the Rome Statute have no obligation under it, and they are therefore not required to satisfy this type of request from the ICC. If my memory does not deceive me, that was inserted into the resolution at the suggestion of the United States. However, the mere fact that a situation has been referred to the ICC by the Security Council does not automatically cancel the immunity of official representatives of the Governments involved. We hope that the States parties to the Statute also realize that.

The immunity of Government officials from criminal prosecution is one of the key norms of customary international law and an extremely important factor for stability in international relations. According to customary law, there are no exceptions to the personal immunity of high officials, while all other government officials enjoy functional immunity. What the ICC has created, therefore, is a situation where we are seeing States consistently refusing to comply with the warrants issued by The Hague for the arrest of the President of the Sudan. This is not surprising. Governments act based on their international legal obligations. This situation will continue to steadily erode the level of trust in the International Criminal Court. That, alas, is the reality and our assessment of the situation. I am therefore unfortunately compelled to say that the ICC today is not a body capable of effectively carrying out the tasks that the Security Council originally entrusted to it.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Once again, we would like to commend you, Mr. President, on your presidency of the Security Council for this month, and to congratulate your country on its outstanding organization of this year's FIFA World Cup.

As you mentioned in your statement, Mr. President, the Sudan, like other States that are not party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), has no obligation to the Court with regard to all the provisions of its Statute, including part IX, on international cooperation. That is why we are here today not to address the Court but the Council, in full respect for the Charter of the United Nations. The Sudan is an active member of the international community, and we are therefore fully committed to respecting customary international law and the various international treaties and conventions to which we are party. Combating impunity is one of our top priorities in that regard, and we seek to achieve effective peace and justice in Darfur while dealing with a conflict that is coming to an end.

We were surprised to hear Prosecutor Bensouda refer in her statement to Abdel Hussein, a new name that was added only today to her list. As we will prove later on, our regional organization, the African Union, has always categorically insisted, in all its resolutions at the summit level, on its total commitment to combating impunity. The Council has already seen for itself that the main reason for many members of the African Union to become party to the Rome Statute is to be able to fight impunity. That is why the African Union and its Member States — bitterly, objectively, continually and consistently — criticize the International Criminal Court, especially the Office of the Prosecutor, for its practices and the many ways in which the Statute contradicts international law. The African Union and its Member States have underscored their commitment to fight impunity.

The idea of establishing an international criminal legal system as a means for applying international criminal law was implemented only in 2002, when the Rome Statute of the Court came into force. Unfortunately, this young regime quickly fell victim to distortions and corruption — which the Prosecutor calls distraction and asks us to ignore it. Because the principle of universality has always been subject to politicization, the system has fallen victim to abhorrent selectivity, whereby where the Court and the Office of the Prosecutor have focused their jurisdictional activities on African States almost exclusively. The response of the African Union has been a harsh one.

Furthermore, the Court has sought to arrest the President of an African State — the Sudan — while arrests have never been seen in any other region of the world. My brother the representative of Ethiopia eloquently addressed this issue today. The accusation is not because of a committed crime that falls under the jurisdiction of the Court, but because of the nationality of the accused person. This politicization and selectivity in the work of the Court were exposed by WikiLeaks in February 2009. The objective is to achieve political aims by putting pressure on certain States and exploiting them politically in order to reach great bargains.

The report of the Office of the Prosecutor that was submitted for our consideration today admits that the political exploitation, distortion and corruption have led to a dangerous situation. I would like at this point to paragraph 9 of the report, which refers to the response to the rejection by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the accusation by the Court of violating its international commitments:

> "the Appeals Chamber also invited expressions of interest for observations from States Parties and professors of international law, because Jordan's appeal 'raises legal issues that may have implications beyond the present case'".

The ICC feels that it is imperilled as a result of a situation in which it was put by the previous Prosecutor, Luis Moreno Ocampo, a corrupt individual. The ICC now finds itself in an out-of-control situation. The Rome Statute is contradictory to international customary law and to the immunities enjoyed by Heads of State and Government. You yourself were particularly clear on that point, Mr. President, in your statement as the representative of the Russian Federation to the Security Council. There is also much controversy about the legality and legitimacy of Article 13 (b) of the Rome Statute, particularly pertaining to cases referred by the Security Council to the ICC.

This situation led the African Union in its Summit held in January to request an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the immunity of Heads of State. Before that, the African Union had attempted for several years to communicate and undertake a dialogue with the Security Council in order to put an end to the procedures being enacted against the President of the Republic of the Sudan under Article 16 of the Rome Statute. We have always sought to be above board about these questions so as to ensure that we can have a decisive ruling concerning the position under international law with regard to the issue of privileges and immunities to be enjoyed by Heads of State. We wanted to be clear on this issue because we believe that all the States Members of the United Nations, whether or not they are party to the Rome Statute, want clarity and decisiveness on this issue.

It is regrettable that the former and current Prosecutors, in their 27 different reports on Darfur, have come up against difficulties linked to the fact that they are incapable of defining their own mission or their own raison d'être. There have also been problems with the drafting their various reports and statements submitted to the Security Council under resolution 1593 (2005), which have also been incoherent. We have said repeatedly — and the representative of the Russian Federation also made this point — that issues relating to Darfur and Libya are always submitted in

the context of reports that do not seem to be reports of the International Criminal Court, but rather reports that are issued by a monitoring body.

We see that the Prosecutor and her Office have chosen an erroneous methodology in their report for our consideration today. They lied about an aerial bombardment of the Jebel Marra region in central Darfur during the reporting period between January and June. The aerial bombardment never happened at all. This lie is added to another lie contained in the report issued by the Prosecutor's Office in September 2016. It claimed that chemical weapons had been used by the Sudanese armed forces in Jebel Marra region. That accusation was fabricated by the British group Amnesty International. Unfortunately, the British representative mentioned this dangerous accusation in her statement, which could revive the conflict in Darfur.

It is therefore no surprise that today the Sudan is firmly opposed to the actions and activities of the ICC. The report described us as being hostile to the Court. The meddling of the Court imperils security and political and social stability in the Sudan. All of this presents risks to the situation in Darfur and serves to incite rebel mvements to commit fresh violations targeting victims, whom the Prosecutor claims to be protecting.

We would like to draw the Council's attention to another serious issue, namely, the fact that the Prosecutor and her Office have stepped outside the proper framework of what should be their jurisdiction. They have gone beyond the jurisdiction set for them in resolution 1593 (2005). The resolution sets clear geographical limits for the case referred to the Court. It was to deal only with Darfur. However, paragraph 33 of the Prosecutor's report refers to protests in Khartoum and the arrest of 411 people who were protesting austerity measures and taken by the Government. The relevant paragraph states that "hundreds of people reportedly continue to be arbitrarily detained in [the] Sudan for prolonged periods of time." We insist once again upon the need for accountability pertaining to such acts, which are not within the framework defined in the resolution.

Lastly, the Prosecutor's report mentions a quotation from two statements delivered by the representative of Senegal in June and December 2017. The quotation was selectively and partially cited to such an extent that its meaning was completely distorted. Moreover, my friend the representative of the Netherlands also brought up this issue. We are happy to present the Council with the complete quotation, which overall corresponds with our beliefs and those of the African Union and the international community. I would like to quote what the representative of Senegal mentioned in his two statements:

> "Subscribing to the principles of accountability and justice, my country — like the African Union, which calls for re-establishing peace and justice in Darfur — continues to believe that dialogue and reconciliation are essential steps towards bringing out comprehensive and definitive peace and finding a lasting solution" (*S/PV.8132, p. 19*).

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of Ethiopia has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I would like to add a few words to what I said earlier.

First, let us not kid ourselves. There are many double standards with regard to ensuring international justice and fighting impunity. We strongly believe that the original referral was absolutely wrong. We in the region knew that was the case. Therefore, our position on the matter is in no way to be understood as allowing impunity. By the way, the African Union is perhaps the only organization in the world whose charter, which is called the Constitutive Act, provides for the organization to intervene in the internal affairs of member States in situations in which war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide have been committed. I doubt that any other organization has that kind of provision. I might be mistaken.

Having once made a mistake, the Security Council seems to insist on not rectifying it. Frankly, the Council has no case here, and Member States have to realize that.

Incidentally, my objection to what the Prosecutor said was essentially based on the form and style of her presentation, not its substance. Otherwise, the fault lies with the Council, not with the Prosecutor. The referral was wrong, and it needs to be withdrawn. I also agree with what the Permanent Representative of the Sudan said in connection with the statement delivered by our colleague from the Netherlands concerning the Permanent Representative of Senegal's past statement (see S/PV.8132).

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to Prosecutor Bensouda to respond to the comments and questions made.

Ms. Bensouda: I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to reply to the comments made moments ago by the representative of the Republic of the Sudan. As the Security Council is aware, only rarely do I take the opportunity to respond to comments made following my reports on the Darfur situation. I have not done so for two years. However, today I feel compelled to do so. I always listen carefully to the statements delivered by the representative of the Republic of the Sudan. I regret the hostile and disrespectful language directed at me personally, as well as my Office and the International Criminal Court (ICC) at large.

It is perhaps ironic that, owing to the Government of the Sudan's policy of complete non-cooperation with my Office, it is here in the seat of the body that referred the Darfur situation to my Office that I have come closest to anything resembling a so-called dialogue with the Government of the Sudan. This is a state of affairs that I wish to remedy, and I once again repeat my offer to the Sudan to discuss the real issues at stake here and engage on the issue of surrendering any or all of the suspects to my Office. Despite these repeated demands made and the groundless allegations levelled against me and the Court, I remind all parties that the ICC, including my Office, is entirely independent and regulated by a robust legal and procedural framework that guarantees fair trial rights and due process to all. I strongly reject the continued baseless allegations of conspiracy theorists and improper motives. It is tiring and demonstrates a lack of respect for not only the Council and its important work, but also the victims of atrocity crimes and the cause of international criminal justice, more broadly.

Let me be clear: I and my Office are interested only in pursuing accountability for alleged crimes in connection with the Darfur situation in a fair and impartial manner in accordance with the Rome Statute. We hope that our efforts will bring about justice for the thousands of victims of those alleged crimes, while respecting all rights of the suspects. That deep need for justice and accountability is of course why the Council referred the situation in Darfur to my Office in the first place. Our investigations have uncovered, and continue to uncover, evidence that supports the allegations of the most serious crimes allegedly committed by the suspects in the Darfur situation, which include representatives of the Government of the Sudan and its current President. This is a fact that the Government of the Sudan cannot simply wish away. Furthermore, to the extent that it must be said again, I remind all those listening today that the warrants of arrest were issued only after the independent judges of the Court were satisfied that there were reasonable grounds to believe that the suspects of those warrants committed crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court as alleged by my Office. As is the case in any national system, which my Office complements, those allegations should be answered by the suspects. To date, the Government of the Sudan has refused to surrender any suspect to the Court so that the truth can be determined by the chambers of the Court in full transparency. So to the Government of the Sudan I say this. Rather than uttering the same tired slurs, it should transfer the suspects to the Court and let the facts and the evidence speak the truth.

I now address the victims, who continue to yearn for justice. They should take courage in the example set by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Ratko Mladić was indicted in 1995, not arrested until almost 16 years later, finally convicted last year of crimes that include genocide, and sentenced to life in prison. The victims should therefore not be discouraged by inaccurate statements aimed at shielding those who bear criminal responsibility. They should not stop their pursuit of justice or their willingness to come forward with evidence to my Office. In our pursuit of justice in the Darfur situation, I assure them that my Office will not stop; that I will not stop. We are committed to doing our job by the Rome Statute, and without fear or favor.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8291

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8291st meeting

Thursday, 21 June 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Polyanskiy	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2018/611)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2018/611)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; Mr. Bédializou Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic; and Brigadier General Hermínio Teodoro Maio, Force Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic.

Mr. Nébié and Brigadier General Maio are joining this meeting via video tele-conference from Bangui.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/611, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic.

I now give the floor to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga.

Mr. Onanga-Anyanga (*spoke in French*): Allow me first and foremost to congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council for this month and for the excellent way in which Russia has organized the FIFA World Cup. This being the era of the selfie, I should have liked to take one with you behind the ball at your desk.

I welcome the Security Council's unity with respect to the prevailing situation in the Central African Republic and the importance that the international community continues to attach to that country, its Government and its people. The participation in this briefing of my sister, the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic; the Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic, my brother Moussa Nébié; and of my friend Brigadier General Hermínio Teodoro Maio, Force Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, sends a strong message of the international community's commitment to supporting the Central African Republic. It is indeed essential that, in addition to the voices of the Central African authorities themselves, the Council hear those of all who are working together for the restoration of lasting peace in the Central African Republic.

The most recent developments in the Central African Republic since I last addressed the Security Council in February this year (see S/PV.8187) and again on 23 May, during a meeting on various items, demonstrate the extent to which the Central African Republic still needs the full commitment of the Security Council. Since late February, the Central African Republic has faced several outbreaks of violence, both in Bangui and in the interior. However, while the capital was the scene of violent clashes in April and early May, there have recently been encouraging signs of calm.

The threat of attacks on Bangui by some radical elements of the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) have rekindled fears among the population of the capital. Although the robust stance of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) has prevented such threats from materializing, this disturbing rhetoric has unfortunately been exploited by shady political actors who have sought to exploit instability and to fuel ethnic and religious tensions.

Armed groups and factions continue to exert a negative influence on large parts of the country, particularly in the east, centre and north-west of the country. Violent clashes among armed groups, such as those that regrettably took place between the FPRC and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique yesterday in Ndélé, also continue to endanger the lives of civilians.

In that highly volatile context, MINUSCA continues to implement its mandate to protect civilians. In fact, our daily work literally consists, in the words of Dag Hammarskjöld, in building bridges against the breaking waves of violence and disintegration. This is

obviously no easy task. The Mission is overwhelmed and its military, police and civilian personnel are the targets of armed groups and criminal gangs, both in the capital and in the countryside. The threats against peacekeeping personnel continue to grow, as Council members have read in the report before them today (S/2018/611).

I therefore appeal for the Council's ongoing support to ensure that MINUSCA has the capacity to respond to the considerable challenges it faces daily. The quality of its investment will be the best guarantee for strengthening constitutional legitimacy and the performance of MINUSCA in the effort to restore the authority of the State. It will also be the best way to prevent future disasters. To that end, every effort has been made to reach the maximum level of force authorized by the Council in resolution 2387 (2017). These additional troops will strengthen our capacity to protect civilians, in the spirit of the recommendations of the report of the independent investigation by Brigadier General (retired) Fernand Marcel Amoussou. Their performance and good behaviour will remain paramount for the Mission.

The current volatile security situation and recurrent clashes among armed groups continue to negatively affect the political process. Nevertheless, the international partners remain committed to stabilizing the country, particularly through the efforts of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. My brother and friend, Special Representative Moussa Nébié, will provide comprehensive insights on that issue shortly. I, for one, wish to reaffirm the full support of the United Nations and MINUSCA for that vital initiative for the return of peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic

I would like to commend the strategic role of the Peacebuilding Fund in supporting the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and the African Initiative. In addition, the first meeting of the International Support Group on the Central African Republic was held in Bangui on 11 April. The meeting sent a strong signal to the people of the Central African Republic by demonstrating that the international community has not forgotten their fate and remains committed to supporting the country's stabilization and development efforts. The meeting of 11 April also highlighted the importance of increased cooperation among the countries of the subregion to ensure the long-term stability of the Central African Republic.

I am also encouraged by the support of President Touadera and of the authorities on the panel of facilitators, including in meetings with armed groups, and by the increased national ownership of the process. If it is to be successful, the process must be inclusive and in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution. It is therefore crucial that other segments of the Central African society be involved in the peace process and participate fully in the ongoing stabilization efforts. What is at stake is the search for the necessary consensus around the social contract between the sons and daughters of the Central African Republic so that the co-existence to which they are deeply attached can become a reality in a plural, united and reconciled nation. It will be equally important to support the commitment of the African Initiative panel to neighbouring countries to promote coherent and sustainable subregional and regional commitment to the stabilization and development of the Central African Republic.

In that context, MINUSCA continues to work closely working with the Government to launch local peace and reconciliation initiatives in many prefectures, aimed at reducing security threats and facilitating humanitarian access. Religious, community, women and youth representatives have played a ket role in the success of these processes. These local peace plans also served as the foundation for local disarmament programmes. In Bangassou and Bria — cities that endured heavy violence in 2017 — the local peace process has encouraged the handover of over 1,000 weapons by armed groups and the participation of these groups in socioeconomic reintegration programmes. These local peace initiatives and the results they have achieved help create conditions conducive to the comprehensive peace process led by the African Initiative.

(*spoke in English*)

The restoration of State authority throughout the entire territory of the Central African Republic remains key to stabilizing the situation and setting the country on a path to long-term stability. The report before the Council today spells out the substantial progress made by the national authorities, including the deployment of prefects and sub-prefects, as well as other sectors of civil administration, with the support of the peacekeeping mission, the United Nations system and the country's other bilateral and institutional strategic partners. It is

important and essential that the State administration be increasingly visible and effective in the interior of the country. MINUSCA will continue to stand in support of these Government efforts.

I am particularly encouraged by the progressive deployment of magistrates in new areas of the country and the opening of tribunals outside of Bangui. Everywhere I have traveled in the Central African Republic, I have heard a constant demand for justice to help communities address criminality and to counter the country's long, sad history of impunity. The National Assembly recently adopted a law establishing the rules of procedure and evidence for the Special Criminal Court, as well as an amended law on the Court's establishment, organization and functioning. The judicial police officers attached to the Court have been hired and started their work. Those steps should allow the Court to commence investigations in the near future.

Despite the slow but steady progress to rebuild national courts, Central Africans have new hope that the perpetrators of the gravest crimes will finally face justice. Meanwhile, steps initiated by the Head of State to advance transitional justice are also encouraging. Justice and reconciliation must indeed progress simultaneously.

The gradual deployments of the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA) and the gendarmerie and police outside Bangui have also contributed to increasing the State's capacity across the country. FACA units trained by the European Union Training Mission are slowly taking up positions in the interior of the country. In joint operations with MINUSCA in Paoua, Obo and Sibut, FACA has helped secure new areas, reduce violence by armed groups and address criminal activity. We will continue to work with the Government to ensure that newly reformed units of the Central African Armed Forces are professional and continue to reflect the ethnic diversity of the country, as well as to ensure that their deployments are coordinated with MINUSCA and other partners, within the framework of planned reform of the security sector. It is in that context that the Secretary-General wrote to the Security Council, on 15 May, to ensure that MINUSCA's joint deployment with FACA forms the core of both a successful security response and an effective exit strategy.

I must once more bring to the Security Council's attention the persistently dire humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic. One in four Central Africans has had to abandon his or her home. Nearly 700,000 people remain internally displaced, while another 568,000 are refugees in neighbouring countries. In the meantime, attacks against humanitarian workers make the Central African Republic the deadliest humanitarian context in the world. During the latest outbreak of violence in Bambari, armed groups looted the offices of several humanitarian agencies, forcing them to suspend operations. The continuing attacks on humanitarians severely undermine their ability to provide vital assistance, with awful consequences for the Central African population and the functioning of essential social services in health and education.

The Central African people urgently need the assistance of international partners to fill the humanitarian funding gap. Only 4 per cent of the 2018 humanitarian response plan has been funded, leaving many priority regions without assistance. That needs to be addressed, and we are grateful for the continued support of the Security Council.

The risk of escalating violence in the Central African Republic and the unnecessary suffering inflicted on the population demand our continued full attention and support. The country cannot afford more clashes among armed groups seeking opportunity to pillage and exploit natural resources. It is not too late to stop that predatory behavior from eroding progress towards building an effective, accountable and inclusive Central African State. It is not too late to prevent religion and ethnicity from becoming the driving factor of conflict. At present, that is still the result of manipulation for political gains, which finds echo among vulnerable groups. It is by no means the general feeling among Central Africans.

As long as the hands of the State — the bedrock of legitimate force — are not stronger than the illegitimate groups and criminal organizations, our efforts to establish lasting peace and stability in the Central African Republic will continue to be seriously challenged. Central Africans remain desperate to see a functioning State and an end to the criminal activities of armed groups. While there are many positive steps, the progress has still been too slow, for understandable reasons, and remains under threat from those who seek private gains through violence.

Together with the African Initiative and other partners, MINUSCA will continue to support the

Central African Government to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of the majority of Central Africans, from all parts of the country and all communities, who hold the hope for the country's future. Our resolve remains strong, heeding the Secretary-General's call to all of us to remain engaged with a considerable dose of patience and dedication and in a spirit of sacrifice. With the support of a united Security Council and region, we will ensure that the vision and hopes of Central Africans for lasting peace, stability and shared prosperity become a reality.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Onanga-Anyanga for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Nébié.

Mr. Nébié (*spoke in French*): I can see, Mr. President, from the ball on the table, which we can see even from here in Bangui, that you are also in the football spirit. I wish good luck to your national team, and may the best team win.

I would like to thank all the members of the Security Council for the invitation today, and especially for their continued support with regard to the situation in the Central African Republic.

My briefing will touch on five points: first, the activities of the panel of facilitators for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic; secondly, the outcome of the second round; thirdly, the steps taken by the panel following the recent incidents; fourthly, the agenda for the preparations for the dialogue; and, fifthly, financing needs.

With regard to the panel's work, from 19 February to 1 April, the panel undertook a second visit to armed groups. Members will recall that I provided a partial report on 21 March while the panel was in the midst of its mission. The 14 armed groups all renewed their grievances, which can be summarized in 70 points that cover issues of defence, security, political matters, justice, reconciliation, humanitarian concerns and socioeconomic recovery. Following the mission, a report was presented to the country's President, Prime Minister and National Assembly, as well as to the diplomatic corps, the political parties, the victims' group and civil society. Recommendations were made to the Government for speeding up the implementation of various programmes, including on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation (DDRR); the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan; and the deployment of State authority throughout the country.

Secondly, on the results of the second round, as I mentioned, we received 70 written, detailed grievances from 14 armed groups, which serve as a working paper for the Government. There was relative calm and acceptance of State authority in several parts of the country, including Kaga Bandoro, Birao, Kouki, Bria and Mobaye. Certain groups that initially did not endorse it also accepted the DDRR programme. In addition, it is important to note the commitment of the country's President to carefully consider the grievances.

Thirdly, with regard to the steps taken by the panel following the incidents in April and May, the unfortunate events in April in the PK5 neighbourhood resulted in fatalities and a number of injuries. Those incidents had consequences for the central part of the country, in Ndélé and Kaga Bandoro, where armed groups hoped for a coalition in order to approach Bangui. Given the gravity of the situation, from 15 May to 1 June, the panel engaged in intensive consultations with armed groups both in the centre of the country and in Bangui in order to remobilize them towards the African Initiative and to urge them not to succumb to escalation and confrontation. The panel also made contact with stakeholders, leaders and those with influence on the PK5 criminal group to dissuade them from conflation, rumours and chaos, with a view to restoring calm in the country and to provide an opportunity for dialogue as a way out the crisis. Such action, together with goodwill, including on the part of the diplomatic corps and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), resulted in the return to relative calm since mid-May. Since then, the panel has been working to step up the process, since the incidents that I mentioned, as well as the issue of the international agenda, has somewhat delayed our provisional timetable for convening the dialogue.

Fourthly, with regard to the timetable for preparing the dialogue, the panel is taking time to reflect on the preparation, in particular the convening and handling, of the dialogue. Preparing the armed groups for dialogue is taking place in terms of workshops to teach them basic negotiation skills, particularly on how to resolve the crisis peacefully. That has started and continues as I speak. In the context of preparing the Government delegation to the dialogue, tomorrow I will meet the Government delegation appointed to take

part in the dialogue. There is also the preparation of civil society actors to monitor the implementation of the agreement resulting from the dialogue. With regard to visits to former Presidents, the visit to President Djotodia took place in Cotonou on 8 June, while the one to President Bozizé is still to take place. There are also plans to organize visits to some countries of the Economic Community of Central African States. A little earlier, my brother Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga told the Security Council a bit about the subregional repercussions of the crisis.

Following all that, the holding of the dialogue should therefore be successful and, in principle, the negotiations should lead to a consensus-based agreement that will cover the responsibilities of all parties, both Government and armed groups, the budgetary implications, the related timetable and activities and the follow-up mechanisms. The preparatory activities seek to create an atmosphere conducive to preparing the parties' minds for calm, tolerance and consideration of one another with a view to a peaceful, fruitful and high-quality dialogue. It is pointless to hurry today while minds are still not ready for dialogue. If we launch it immediately, we risk reaching an impasse. However, I believe that, with the preparation of the armed groups, it is already falling into place. I think that we are on the right track. By then, we will have visited the armed groups and, when our preparations with the Government are ready, we will be in a position to convene the dialogue.

Fifthly, on financing needs, the panel is determined to complete its work in the coming weeks, that is, as soon as possible, with the convening and the holding of the dialogue. However, despite the efforts to mobilize funds, we sorely lack financial resources. A sum of $3 million is needed for the remaining activities. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the United States of America, which has just disbursed $500,000 to the panel's funds. Participants will well understand that I am looking at the other members of the Security Council. I also thank the European Union, which is organizing the preparation workshops on behalf of the panel. I thank MINUSCA and Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga, who has worked tirelessly to support us. I would also like to thank the Peacebuilding Fund and the United Nations Development Programme for also supporting us.

In conclusion, in order not to take long — I have five minutes — I would like to underscore to the Security Council that failure is not an option. The only option is the success of the dialogue and a return to peace for the Central African people. To that end, a significant part of the peacekeeping and re-establishment of international peace and security falls to the members of the Security Council. It is up to them to take specific, concrete and robust measures and actions in support of the stakeholders of the international community on the ground so as to promote and accelerate a return to peace for the Central African people, who, I would emphasize, implore the Council to do its utmost to quite simply ensure them peace and freedom of movement in their country.

If the Security Council members step up their efforts and provide concrete support to the panel, at the next meeting on the Central African Republic I will be very happy to tell them that the dialogue has been held, a consensus-based agreement has been reached, a follow-up mechanism is in place, peace is no longer an empty word and the time frame for implementing activities under the agreement is in place. I thank the Security Council for its attention. I would like to reiterate my gratitude to my brother Mr. Onanga-Anyanga and the European Union for all the goodwill that we have seen on a daily basis. We work together with all the diplomatic missions represented here daily because we know that we are all bound by the same fate to the Central African Republic. Our common goal is to ensure that the Central African people emerge from the crisis, which has lasted too long. I assuure members that when we are in the field, the only demand made of us is that they want peace, to move freely in their own territory and for us to do our utmost for the Government and the armed groups to reach an understanding and give them peace. I thank the members of the Council and wish them all good luck and success in the meeting.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Nébié for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Brigadier General Maio.

Brigadier General Maio: I am grateful and very honoured to have this opportunity to address the members of the Security Council on the redeployment of the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA) and the operational and logistical support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA) contributes

to defence sector reform as part of the security sector reform coordinated by MINUSCA. Our Mission mandate includes providing strategic advice, education and training to the Ministry of Defence and the Forces armées centrafricaines and supporting the Central African authorities in modernizing FACA as an self-sustainable, credible, accountable and ethnically balanced armed force that is under democratic control.

The EUTM RCA is now completing its first two-year mandate. We have completed the training, or the validation, of nearly 3,000 soldiers, including three infantry battalions. Our future two-year mandate, [illegible]s on the decision of Member States, [illegible]as to continue that training, enlarging our Mission area to a new training centre in Bouar, and to support the internal security forces. The EUTM RCA mandate establishes the need for close coordination with MINUSCA, including our role as an advisory body on defence issues for the redeployment of FACA countrywide. All political actors and international partners agree on the necessity to restore State authority quickly throughout the country as a key factor in resolving the crisis. Therefore, the progressive redeployment of the armed forces, as well as the internal security forces, is recognized as an urgent key element that would enable public institutions and services to be restored to the entire territory, deter armed groups and foster conditions for reconciliation and peace.

The Council may be aware that armed forces trained by EUTM have already started to deploy operations with the support of MINUSCA in Obo, Paoua, Sibut, and recently, in Bangassou. Despite considerable logistical and tactical capabilities constraints, all operations are ongoing. Last week, the number of FACA personnel deployed out of Bangui reached 638. Reports on their performance in the joint operations have been favourable, both from the operational perspective and on the part of non-governmental organizations and public opinion.

FACA troops trained or validated by EUTM are now being armed and equipped by third States. We should not lose momentum in their redeployment and operationalization. To that end, MINUSCA remains a critical element. Continued support to FACA in joint deployments in limited military operations is essential. As the letter of the Secretary-General states,

> "It is important to note that, should the operational and logistical support outlined not be provided by MINUSCA or through bilateral agreements, the ability of these Central African armed forces and accompanying police and gendarmerie to perform critical security tasks entrusted to them, and progress in the political process and stabilization of the country, may be significantly undermined." (*S/2018/463, para. 38*)

Therefore, we stand by the recommendations on operational and logistical support outlined in paragraph 32 of the same letter.

However, it is important to bear in mind the limits of FACA's immediate deployment, resulting from logistical and command-and-control difficulties to manage a multiplicity of operations across the vast territory of the Central African Republic. Therefore, immediate deployments must be considered a transition phase, complemented by the garrison deployment, which is the base model for the new FACA, as established in the national defence plan. Garrison-model deployment will allow FACA to sustain operations if needed in the designated areas, thereby reassuring the population and contributing to a safe and secure environment. Nevertheless, garrison deployment will represent a major effort, especially with regard to infrastructure and sustained capabilities.

The first step should be taken in Bouar, as an entry point for subsequent operations in western Central African Republic, thereby allowing control in a region that is critical to the country's economy. Bouar will be established in accordance with the garrison model, where the authorities of the Central African Republic plan to deploy a battalion-size unit and create a non-commissioned officer school and training centre in close coordination with EUTM. The European Union is firmly committed to that plan and will be responsible for essential infrastructure projects. Other countries or international organizations could support similar projects in other regions of the Central African Republic, in accordance with the national defence plan signed by President Touadera.

Last by not least, I would like to draw the Council's attention to the importance of the African initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. Despite the progress made in the FACA build-up, the crisis in the Central African Republic will not be resolved by military force. The increase of FACA capabilities and its operational deployment contribute to the creation of conditions conducive to the political

negotiations process, leading to national reconciliation. In that context, the commitment of the countries of the region and the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process are absolutely essential if peace is to be achieved in the Central African Republic.

In conclusion, MINUSCA support for the FACA redeployment is of the utmost importance. In that way the Government's plans for its armed forces, based on the garrisoning of forces already trained or validated by EUTM, will perhaps be made possible and enable the authority of the State to be extended and exercised. National reconciliation is the ultimate goal in order to create the conditions for a MINUSCA exit strategy from the Central African Republic.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Brigadier General Maio for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make a statement.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to sincerely thank our three briefers for their very insightful statements, which highlight the attention that the Security Council must continue paying to the situation in the Central African Republic.

France is concerned about the ongoing acts of violence committed by armed groups in Bangui and in surrounding areas against civilian populations, humanitarian workers and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). We are also concerned about efforts to incite hatred and violence and to use religion for criminal purposes. We will continue to closely monitor developments in the situation. In that regard, we believe that it is essential that the Security Council continue to show its full support for President Touadera and the Central African authorities in their efforts to foster national reconciliation and restore State authority, which are both key to the success of the process under way. It is also vital to continue to encourage the Central African authorities to work to restore justice, disarm armed groups and rebuild the country's economy. As worrisome as the current situation is, we should not disregard the fact that progress has been made and that a solution to the crisis is possible.

Violence perpetrated by armed groups continues to destabilize the country. It is accompanied by unacceptable human rights violations and causes the humanitarian situation to continue to deteriorate. It is therefore essential that all armed groups in Bangui and in the rest of the country stop all efforts to destabilize the country, as they are at variance with the commitments made before the panel of facilitators of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

The Council's message to armed groups must be extremely strong. They must lay down their weapons and make an immediate and unconditional commitment to the peace process. They should know that they will not go unpunished for the violence they perpetrate. I recall that the Security Council has tools to impose sanctions on those who seek to undermine the stability of the Central African Republic and are responsible for inciting violence and attacks against civilians, humanitarian workers or MINUSCA. In that regard, I would also like to underscore the urgency of implementing the far-reaching African Initiative road map in order to reach a comprehensive political agreement.

Following the two field missions to meet with the armed groups, it is now vital to move towards direct discussions with the Central African Government and the armed groups within a framework of an inclusive dialogue with other segments of Central African society, in particular women, whose participation in the peace process is crucial. To that end, we call upon the African Union and all States of the region to continue providing support at the highest level so as to ensure that the next steps to implement the road map will be successful.

All efforts to bring about peace and stability in the Central African Republic also depend on the restoration of State authority in all administrative, security or judicial areas. It is therefore more vital than ever to continue to provide support to rebuild the Central African defence and security forces. We call on our Security Council partners to support the option for MINUSCA to assist the Central African forces trained by the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM-RCA) in their gradual and managed redeployment. That is an essential point to restore the authority of the State, on which all else hinges. Last November, in resolution 2387 (2017), the Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare recommendations on the subject, and they were provided on 15 May. It is now up to us to study those recommendations in detail to then implement them. I

take this opportunity to commend the excellent work carried out by EUTM-RCA.

I would like to conclude my statement by reaffirming France's full support for MINUSCA and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for their exemplary efforts. MINUSCA operates in a difficult environment but plays an indispensable role, whether in protecting civilians, supporting the peace and reconciliation process, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid or supporting the Central African Republic's recovery. Unfortunately, the Blue Helmets pay a heavy price for their commitment; five have been killed since the beginning of the year. I would like to once again pay tribute to them and to all troop- and police-contributing countries.

In that context, while new contingents have arrived in the Central African Republic, and others will soon follow, to strengthen MINUSCA, France stresses the importance of using those additional reinforcements, as authorized by resolution 2387 (2017), to give MINUSCA greater mobility and manoeuvring capabilities, particularly in the protection of civilians. In that sense, with regard to the protection of civilians, France welcomes the efforts undertaken by MINUSCA to improve its performance and continue the work already under way with troop-contributing countries to prevent cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and ensure that they do not go unpunished. Those efforts must continue.

Lastly, France remains very attentive to the issue of children in armed conflict in the Central African Republic, and welcomes the progress achieved by MINUSCA, especially with the signing of an action plan by 1 of the 14 armed groups to put an end to grave violations against children, including their recruitment and sexual violence, and the release of several thousand child soldiers since 2014.

I would like to conclude my statement by reiterating the importance for the Council and the international community to remain mobilized and united with a view to achieving lasting peace in the Central African Republic. Maintaining our mobilization and unity is a precondition to a lasting solution to the crisis, which is within our collective reach.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this meeting and thanks Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), for his briefing. We also welcome the participation of Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio.

Peru notes with concern that the efforts to restore the presence of the State and promote internal reconciliation have not yet succeeded in consolidating adequate responses to the serious deterioration of security in much of the country and to the dramatic humanitarian situation of its population. Most of the country is living in a state of permanent conflict as a result of an increase in inter-ethnic violence, access to weapons and the struggle for control of natural resources waged among armed groups, as well as the promotion of messages inciting religious violence, hatred and stigmatization. That has led to the continued attacks on the civilian population, MINUSCA personnel and humanitarian workers, which have spread to the country's capital. The Central African Republic is today one of the most dangerous and difficult environments.

In that context, we highlight the vital joint efforts that MINUSCA and the European Union are carrying out in training Central African military and police forces, such as projects on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and security sector reform. It is essential to provide those forces with the necessary operational and logistical support.

The difficult socioeconomic reality also contributes to the country's instability. That is why it is critical that the international community back the Government's efforts as embodied in the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and the Mutual Engagement Framework. We especially believe that it is crucial to generate employment, particularly for young people, in order to prevent their recruitment into violent groups. In that regard, we highlight the role of the panel of facilitators of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic in promoting dialogue between armed groups and civil society.

It is also essential to create synergies between the United Nations and relevant regional organizations and neighbouring countries with a view to coordinating efforts in favour of political processes and border crime control. In that regard, we welcome the joint visit of Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Mr. Smail Chergui to the

Central African Republic in April, and we agree with the Secretary-General on the need to revive the bilateral joint commissions of the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad and the Sudan.

Those efforts should be complemented by a robust judicial system, which is why we recognize the efforts of the Central African authorities to operationalize their judicial institutions, especially the Special Criminal Court and the national human rights commission, with a view to generating strong action against various types of abuse, including cases of sexual violence and the involvement of children in the conflict.

Peru wishes to highlight MINUSCA's sensitive functions in an adverse and complex environment. We believe that its operational capabilities — as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSCA mentioned earlier — must be strengthened, and we therefore stress the need to ensure the safety of the Blue Helmets on the ground. In that regard, we look forward to the results of the Mission's strategic review.

To conclude, I stress the importance of undertaking an inclusive political process by the Central African authorities involving men and women of different social, economic, ethnic and religious backgrounds. The solution to the crisis in the Central African Republic can be found only through dialogue and national reconciliation among the Central Africans themselves.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, our delegation thanks and commends Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General; Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic; and Brigadier General Hermínio Teodoro Maio, Force Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, for their detailed briefings on the reality of recent events in the Central African Republic and the overall situation in the country.

The Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is concerned about the resurgence of violence and virulence with which ex-Séléka and anti-balaka armed groups control much of the country and attack civilian and military targets, resulting in hundreds of deaths and many injuries, through their operations in the PK5 neighbourhood and other parts of the country. The armed groups continue to focus their attacks on humanitarian workers and peacekeepers of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in Tagbara, north-east of Bambari, which we strongly condemn, while expressing our deepest and most heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, peacekeepers and MINUSCA. These constant acts are aimed at trying to prevent MINUSCA from fulfilling its mandate and commitments to the international community. We believe that these deliberate attacks on the United Nations peacekeeping forces are totally unacceptable, must be condemned and constitute a war crime, and the perpetrators must be held accountable to international justice.

We also believe that the Government and national authorities of our sister Central African Republic must enjoy the strong support of the international community so that it can promote and pursue the priorities, strategies and activities aimed at achieving, strengthening and promoting peace. We underscore that this process must include the full and effective participation of all political and social stakeholders and of the civilian population, irrespective of ethnic background, gender, language, religion, politics or other opinions. It is essential to advance this process, achieve the desired objectives and ensure that the socioeconomic and cultural needs of all sectors of society are taken into account.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea reiterates its call on all armed groups to lay down their weapons, abandon all forms of violence and destabilizing activities, and commit themselves to the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, whose adopted road map is the result of the coordinated efforts of the authorities of the Central African Republic, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Community of Sant'Egidio, together with the support of several countries of the region, as well as the direct and indirect support provided by the international community, which makes the road map the principle framework for achieving a political solution to the crisis in the Central African Republic.

We welcome with optimism and commend the decision agreed by the Economic Community of Central African States and the Economic Community of West African States during their meeting in Lomé to hold a joint summit, in July, on peace, security and combating radicalization and violent extremism. We also appreciate the joint visit to the Central

African Republic by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and the Secretary-General of ECCAS, during which they reiterated the support of the United Nations and ECCAS for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation. During the meeting between the two senior officials and President Touadera, they welcomed the decision of the Central African Government to reactivate the joint commissions among the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad and the Sudan to address regional security issues.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea supported in its time the renewal of MINUSCA's mandate until 15 November, and we closely followed and praised the work of Special Representative of the United Nations, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, with various groups and with national authorities, MINUSCA and other stakeholders. Those efforts are vital in order to focus increasingly on developing synergies and common ground among the various actors operating in the territory to better coordinate of their activities.

We commend the training provided to the units of the Forces armées centrafricaines, which could support the efforts of MINUSCA, thereby contributing to strengthening the authority of the State. We therefore call for the lifting of the obstacles to the rearmament of the Forces armées centrafricaines.

It would be remiss of me to end this statement without underscoring the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation, which directly affects vulnerable people, in particular women and children, and has resulted in an increase in the number of Central Africans seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, including Chad, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We conclude this statement by emphasizing once again that, among the myriad tasks set forth in MINUSCA's mandate, the protection of civilians and support for the central Government and its armed forces must be prioritized so that the Government can exercise its authority over the entire national territory. To that end and to reiterate a point made by Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, it is vital that broad and resolute support be lent to MINUSCA so that it can carry out the huge and very complex mission that has been conferred upon it by our Council.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea reiterates its full support for our sister Central African Republic in its efforts to address violence and in its genuine desire to achieve sustainable peace through inclusive dialogue and national reconciliation. We congratulate the Government of the Central African Republic for the slow but steady progress it is making towards restoring its authority throughout the entire country.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): At the outset, allow me to thank our briefers, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative Nébié and Brigadier General Maio, for their briefings and their and their teams continued efforts in the Central African Republic. We know how difficult and challenging their missions are, as is the context they are operating in.

Let me also take this opportunity to offer my condolences on behalf of the British Government to the family of the peacekeeper who lost his life in Bambari last week. That senseless death, one of three in the past five weeks, serves to illustrate the deteriorating security situation in the Central African Republic, which concerns the United Kingdom, like other Security Council members, very deeply.

Security in areas that were once considered relatively stable — for example, Bambari and Bangui — has deteriorated. We commend the efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) to respond to and quell the violence and uphold their mandate to protect civilians.

Today, as the report of the Secretary-General's (S/2018/611) states, a quarter of the population have been driven from their homes as they seek safety. There are now more internally displaced people in the Central African Republic than at any other point in the country's history. Over half of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance. Seventy per cent of families do not have access to clean water and 80 per cent of families do not have access to latrines. Despite that, only 20 per cent of the humanitarian response plan has been funded. The United Kingdom has given $9 million so far in 2018, and we encourage all Member States to respond to that appeal.

We call on all armed groups in Bangui and throughout the country to immediately cease all forms of violence, but we also urge political, religious and community leaders to stop incitement to violence on

religious and ethnic grounds. We have seen the tragic consequences of such calls to violence over the past few months. Those in positions of leadership have particular responsibility for their words. The authorities and the international community must hold accountable those involved in attacks, violations of international humanitarian law and abuses and violations of human rights. We must send a clear message that this behaviour is not acceptable and that there will be consequences, as the national justice system continues to develop and the Special Criminal Court makes progress towards operationalization through the enactment of a new legal framework and the appointment of judicial police officers.

We welcome the progress made in extending States' authority to all areas of the country, including through the recent redeployment of civil servants and justice representatives, and we recognize the real challenge of doing so. The deployment of the Forces armées centrafricaines units trained by the European Union Military Training Mission (EUTM) in the Central African Republic is an important step. We commend the EUTM's efforts to support the re-establishment of a cohesive and well-trained national security force. That is not only essential for peace and security in the short term; a well-trained force that respects human rights will help to build trust between civilians and the Government of the Central African Republic, and thereby help to mend the social fabric, which has been deeply damaged by the conflict.

As we have discussed in the Council many times, an inclusive political peace process is the best way to address the grievances of all parties to ensure long-term peace and security. We very much welcome and support the African Union's (AU) leadership on that issue through the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation. The visit to take stock of armed groups' grievances was a good step. The regional credibility of the African Union allows it to positively engage with all groups, and we strongly encourage the AU to continue its good work. We should reflect on how we the Security Council and the international community can best support the African Union and enhance and support the peace initiative. The United Kingdom is open to the African Union's suggestions on how the Council and the international community can play a more supportive role, and we look forward to the interactive dialogue later.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): Let me also thank our three briefers for their informative and useful briefings today.

Let me start by reiterating our full support for United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which is carrying out its work in increasingly difficult circumstances. Since February, security incidents have resulted in the deaths of four peacekeepers. We express our profound condolences to their families for their loss. It is essential that attacks against peacekeepers be investigated and those responsible be brought to justice. In that regard, we appreciate the cooperation of the Central African Republic authorities to ensure accountability for those attacks.

In the light of the fragile advances made over the past two years, we are deeply worried about the deterioration in the security situation in recent months. That has been marked by persistent violence by armed groups, including in Bangui, and we strongly condemn attacks carried out against civilians, humanitarian personnel and peacekeepers. We are also deeply concerned about the erosion of trust among communities, as well as the sectarian rhetoric that seeks to divide societies and incite religious and ethnic hatred. Attempts by armed groups — not least of which the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique — and political actors to fan division and discord for political ends is reckless and worrisome. We are also concerned about the high number of documented incidents of human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. Impunity for acts of violence against civilians, including sexual and gender-based violence, cannot be tolerated. Strong national leadership and communication are imperative at this juncture. The efforts of the Government to ensure national unity continue to have our support. It is essential that the Government, Parliament and armed groups all demonstrate their commitment to national reconciliation and engage in dialogue.

We strongly support the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and welcome the conclusion of the second round of consultations. We hope that the African Union will continue to prioritize advancing the initiative. As it does so, it should fully use its mediation capacity, with the active support from the United Nations, and ensure the implementation of the Libreville road map.

We encourage countries in the region to step up coordinated efforts in support for the endeavours of the Government of the Central African Republic towards peace and stability. Those includes support for the African Initiative as well as efforts to address cross-border challenges, such as transhumance-related violence. The Government's steps to reactivate bilateral joint commissions with a number of neighbouring countries is a welcome step in that direction. An inclusive peace is a credible and sustainable peace. It is crucial that all segments of society — not least women and youth — be engaged in the political process, and that key stakeholders, in addition to armed groups, be included. In parallel to the political process, it is necessary to enhance national reconciliation and transitional justice efforts so as to lay the ground for sustainable peace and stability. The dire humanitarian situation in the country has been further exacerbated by clashes among armed groups and attacks against civilians. We urge all armed groups to fully commit to dialogue and cease all forms of violence. Efforts to respond to the needs of more than half the population now in need of humanitarian assistance must be stepped up.

We welcome the letter of the Secretary-General (S/2018/463) in May on recommendations on the type of support MINUSCA could provide for the progressive deployment of units of the Central African armed forces — trained or certified by the European Union (EU) Training Mission. It is important to ensure cooperation between the United Nations and the EU Training Mission, in particular if MINUSCA is to provide enhanced planning and technical assistance to the Central African armed forces. The Central African authorities must ensure that the members of the Central African Armed Forces are ethnically representative, geographically balance and financially supported and that they adhere to the rule of law and human rights standards. Furthermore, the deployment of armed forces is merely one part of the re-establishment of State authority throughout the country. It must be quickly followed by the provision of basic services in line with the National Strategy for the Restoration of State Authority. That requires not only sustained support from the international community but, crucially, political will and a sense of national ownership from the Central African authorities.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands) (*spoke in French*): I thank the three briefers for the clarity of their statements this morning. I believe that they demonstrated how the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union are working together in close cooperation for peace in the Central African Republic. I also thank their teams, which are made up of people who devote all their efforts and energy in the service of achieving lasting peace.

I join other delegations in conveying our condolences to the families and Governments of the Blue Helmets of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) who lost their lives. I would like to say that today their work is more necessary than ever. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is concerned about and condemns the escalation of intercommunal violence and attacks against civilians, MINUSCA and humanitarian workers. Today I will focus on three aspects of how to respond to the crisis: first, the need to strengthen our support for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation; secondly, the need to protect civilians and prevent incitement to violence; and, thirdly, the imperative redeployment of the Central African Armed Forces.

My first point concerns the peace process conducted under the African Initiative. The Netherlands welcomes the work of Mr. Nebié and the panel of facilitators. In particular, we welcome the holding of consultations with armed groups. However, the increase in violence is undermining the peace process. We firmly condemn such acts and call on armed groups to lay down their weapons. The security of the people in Central Africa must improve so that an inclusive dialogue to achieve peace can begin. We encourage the African Union and MINUSCA to continue working in close cooperation in complementarity. We welcome MINUSCA's efforts to arrive at local agreements and support local initiatives to promote peace. Moreover, the Netherlands welcomes the initiative of President Touadera to reactivate the three bilateral joint commissions between the Central African Republic and Cameroon, Chad and the Sudan. We call on the countries of the region to constructively commit to aggressively confronting the cross-border roots underlying the conflict in the Central African Republic.

Secondly, I underscore the urgent need to protect civilians. They continue to be the first targets in the relentless violence. The protection of civilians must remain MINUSCA's priority. We encourage the Mission to further strengthen its early-warning mechanisms,

but it alone cannot stop the threat of hateful rhetoric, which is toxic to peace in the Central African Republic. The Government of the Netherlands calls on the Central African Government, as well as political and religious leaders, to act to end incitement to violence. We welcome the recent declaration issued by the High Council for Communication and encourage the operationalization of its Office. There can be no peace without justice. In that regard, the progress of the Special Criminal Court is commendable, in particular the adoption of the rules of procedure and evidence.

My third point concerns the importance of strengthening State authority, which is necessary for achieving a lasting solution. The Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes the contribution of the European Union Military Training Mission (EUTM) to the training of the Central African Armed Forces. We recognize, however, that more support is needed to redeploy the EUTM-trained forces. We welcome the recent letter from the Secretary-General describing the conditions under which MINUSCA could play a role in that regard (S/2018/463). We believe that in the current circumstances it is crucial that the Council take a decision on this matter as soon as possible. We call on all international partners contributing to the redeployment of security forces to strengthen their coordination efforts.

We are alarmed, as is the Secretary-General, by the increase in intercommunal violence. A few weeks ago, a young Central African woman working for peace showed us the threats she receives every day on social networks. No one should fear for their lives because of their ethnic origin or religion. We must prevent this conflict from escalating.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my thanks to the Special Representative, Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, for his considerable efforts and leadership.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga for his excellent briefing, and Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio for the quality of theirs.

My delegation welcomes the progress made in restoring State authority throughout the country, in particular through the deployment of the majority of the prefectural corps, of judges and of over 50 per cent of civil servants, as well as the improvement in the provision of basic social services. However, the security and humanitarian situation remains worrisome, despite commendable efforts by the Government and the international community. The resurgence of inflammatory rhetoric, the persistence of intercommunal conflicts and attacks by armed groups against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and humanitarian workers remain of concern. Côte d'Ivoire condemns those acts and, in its capacity as Chair of the Sanctions Committee concerning the Central African Republic, recalls the relevant provisions of resolution 2399 (2018), which set out as criteria for the designation of sanctions the incitement to hatred and violence as well as attacks against civilian populations, MINUSCA soldiers and humanitarian personnel. My country calls on the stakeholders to strictly respect the relevant provisions of resolution 2399 (2018) and to engage in the search for a peaceful solution to the crisis, within the framework of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.

It is essential that national ownership and inclusiveness in the political process be emphasized, which is why, while welcoming local peace and reconciliation initiatives, my delegation also advocates for robust involvement by civil society organizations, ethnic and religious communities, women and young people in the ongoing political dialogue.

Côte d'Ivoire supports the efforts of the Central African Government and commends the leadership of President Touadera, who favours dialogue and consultation both within the Central African Republic and with neighbouring States, in order to create the conditions for national reconciliation and a real commitment by the parties concerned to lasting peace in the country. In that regard, my country notes with satisfaction the Government's efforts to revive the joint bilateral commissions with Chad, Cameroon and the Sudan, with a view to addressing cross-border security challenges.

Pooling efforts in the face of the challenges of insecurity and instability is crucial. My delegation therefore welcomes the joint operations by MINUSCA and the Central African Armed Forces, which, according to the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/611), have significantly reduced the number of attacks against civilians and clashes between armed groups in several regions. In that regard, my country supports the request addressed to the Security Council by the

Secretary-General on 15 May 2018 (S/2018/463), with a view to generating enhanced support for MINUSCA for the gradual and controlled redeployment of the Central African Armed Forces trained or certified by the European Union Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM). Côte d'Ivoire also encourages the donor community to support the efforts of the Government of the Central African Republic within the framework of the joint five-year concept for the immediate and long-term deployment of the defence and internal security forces, adopted in 2018 with the support of MINUSCA and in coordination with EUTM.

My delegation would like to stress the importance of accountability in the search for lasting solutions to the Central African crisis, which is having a negative impact on the entire subregion. It therefore welcomes the Government's efforts aimed at operationalizing the truth, justice, reparations and reconciliation commission. It also welcomes the adoption, on 29 May, of the law enabling the Special Criminal Court to begin its work and investigations into war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Central African Republic since 2003.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire would like to reiterate its support for MINUSCA. We remain convinced that ownership of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation by the Central African stakeholders, with the support of the international community, is the appropriate and sustainable way out of the crisis.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative Nébié and Commander Maio for their detailed briefings this morning.

The United States expresses its deepest condolences for the Tanzanian peacekeeper who died on 3 June and the Burundian peacekeeper who died on 10 June. We also extend our hope for a speedy recovery to those injured in the latest attacks.

The collective goal of the international community must be to achieve a political solution for durable peace and recovery in the Central African Republic. We need to work together to communicate positive progress where it is occurring and to counter narratives by spoilers who seek to de-stabilize the country for their own benefit. We remain committed to President Touadera and his Government. President Touadera continues to strive for peace, justice and accountability and the prevention of further atrocities, and we are pleased the Special Criminal Court for the Central African Republic is operational and ready to hold perpetrators accountable.

The African Union-led peace initiative offers a reasonable starting point for the parties to discuss and conclude a peace agreement. The United States supports this effort and is eager for the African Union (AU) to begin talks with and mediation among the parties to the conflict. We want to invigorate the process and believe the United Nations also needs to increase its engagement in it. A conference is needed to bring together the international community to develop a common strategy for supporting the peace process and the AU. We want to work to ensure that peace talks advance. There is no way ahead in the Central African Republic without a viable peace process backed by the international community.

We commend the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for its local reconciliation efforts, and we highlight the need to harmonize those efforts with broader and similar peace initiatives by civil society organizations so as to ensure a coordinated multitrack approach to peacebuilding in the Central African Republic. We urge MINUSCA to work closely with the AU as those processes make progress.

MINUSCA's support to the Central African Armed Forces is important, and we remain focused on advancing State authority in the Central African Republic. The extension of State authority should continue to be closely linked with ongoing effective security sector reform and disarmament and demobilization programmes.

MINUSCA is a model for robust and proactive peacekeeping, but the Mission is stretched thin and struggles to fully implement its mandate. The environment in which MINUSCA is operating is incredibly complex. We hope that the upcoming strategic review will offer an honest assessment of the challenges facing the Mission. We cannot improve MINUSCA without a thoughtful analysis of the political and security environment in the Central African Republic and of how MINUSCA can achieve its objectives there.

We again offer our thanks to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Special Representative of the African Union and the Force Commander, and to the men and women of MINUSCA for their service.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to welcome our new colleague the representative of the United States of America. We wish him every success and look forward to working closely with him.

At the onset, I should like to thank Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA); Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic; and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio, Force Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic for the valuable updates they have provided the Security Council.

I will focus in my statement today on three aspects.

First, with respect to the security situation, our meeting today is taking place in the context of an unstable security situation in the Central African Republic that has now entered its fifth year. Since April, the security situation has been deteriorating rapidly in a deeply concerning manner owing to the escalation of violence between armed groups and the conflicting parties. Once again there is resurgence of inflammatory rhetoric and hate speech, as well as religious and sectarian incitement. We are concerned at the recurrent violence and attacks committed by those extremist armed groups and gangs that target Muslim-majority areas as well as Muslim religious figures and places of worship, and burn mosques. We condemn in the strongest terms all attacks against people or their holy places because of their religion and denounce all acts of violence and killings as a result of radicalism. We call on the authorities of the Central African Republic to redouble their efforts to stop those actions and increase awareness among all segments of the population so as to put an end to such hate speech and create an environment conducive to coexistence.

Against this backdrop, the security situation in the Central African Republic is deteriorating, which we strongly deplore. Even humanitarian personnel and MINUSCA peacekeepers are being targeted, resulting in a number of dead among Mission staff and many wounded. These attacks have become a source of concern for us and require that we all focus on the security situation in the Central African Republic and support the efforts of President Touadera so that the Government forces can retake control of the security situation. We condemn in the strongest terms the recurrent armed attacks and call for an end thereto. We reiterate our support for all of the statements made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the statements to the press issued by the Security Council in the aftermath of the attacks that took place in recent months, as those attacks against peacekeepers could amount to war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law.

We call on the Government of the Central African Republic to investigate the attacks and hold the perpetrators accountable. We reiterate our support to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga and to MINUSCA in their efforts to help the Government and the people of the Central African Republic to achieve lasting peace and stability.

Secondly, with respect to the humanitarian situation, we have followed the reports of international organizations regarding the humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic and taken note of the information contained in the recent report of the Secretary-General dated 18 June (S/2018/611), and deplore the fact that the humanitarian situation remains critical and that almost half of the country's population is in dire need of urgent humanitarian aid. The Central African Republic has thus become one of the countries most in need of humanitarian assistance, and half of those who are in need are children. As a result of the deterioration in the humanitarian situation, one of four people in the country is now facing a very critical situation. This is worrying and frightening.

Thirdly, cooperation is needed between the various relevant organizations and United Nations offices, including coordination and cooperation efforts between the African Union, the European Union and MINUSCA, in collaboration with the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the Economic Community of Central African States, to support security and stability in the Central African Republic. We reiterate, however, that it is very important to intensify such cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in order to give impetus to the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and to achieve tangible results that will eventually translate into stability in the security situation and reduction of violence in the country.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga and the staff of MINUSCA for their determined efforts to help reinstate stability amid a precarious situation. We hope that they will succeed, for the sake of achieving security and stability for the people of Central African Republic.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to express our gratitude for the briefings by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga; Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic; and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio, Force Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, and we assure them of our full support in the delicate and complex tasks that they are carrying out.

The atmosphere of violence and insecurity created by armed groups in the Central African Republic continues to undermine the commendable efforts made and achievements registered by the Government in the areas of the protection of civilians, the strengthening of State authority, inter-institutional cooperation and the training of the Central African Armed Forces, inter alia. None of these achievements should be overlooked.

The Central African Republic, together with its regional and subregional parners and with the support of the international community, must continue to work in a unified manner in order to find long-term solutions that stabilize the country and achieve a lasting and sustainable peace.

We welcome and support the round of consultations carried out with 14 armed groups by the panel of facilitators for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. This undertaking promotes dialogue and serves to address the root causes of the instability and armed violence in the country. We call on all armed groups to undertake once and for all the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. We also call on them to cease hostilities and to focus their efforts on activities that will benefit the civilian population and promote the stabilization of the Central African Republic.

We commend the support lent to the African Initiative and to the Government by the International Support Group on the Central African Republic and urge it to continue to promote consistent and sustained participation in order to contribute to the stabilization and recovery of the country as well as to ensure greater and enhanced coordination among regional and international partners. In a similar vein, we welcome the decision by the Government of the Central African Republic to reactivate the bilateral joint commissions with Cameroon, Chad and the Sudan, which we trust will serve to limit arms trafficking and the movement of armed groups.

The never-ending spiral of violence fuelled by armed groups, asymmetric attacks and the ongoing clashes between ethnic groups and communities are factors that day in and day out exacerbate the critical humanitarian situation. There are 670,000 displaced persons in the Central African Republic, and 580,000 refugees have fled to neighbouring countries. That situation cannot be ignored. We therefore call upon the international community to continue to provide support through predictable and sustainable financing, particularly to the humanitarian response plan, with a view to confronting the growing need for humanitarian assistance that the people require.

Bolivia condemns all acts that incite violence — especially those motivated by ethnic or religious reasons — and undermine peace, stability and security in the Central African Republic. In that connection, we commend the religious leaders of Bangui for having reached a preliminary agreement with local militias, civil society and local authorities to contain the violence in Bangassou.

We also condemn the attacks carried out by armed groups against civilians, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and peacekeeping forces. We appreciate and welcome the members of the Mission, as well as the military, police and civilian personnel, who carry out their work in a volatile environment of great risk. We regret the loss of life among both Mission personnel and civilians, and we take this opportunity to express our condolences to the family members and Governments of the fallen.

We applaud the efforts of the Mission to identify regions that lack additional capacity to protect their civilian population and to support the Government through peace and reconciliation initiatives, processes that provide frameworks to reduce violence, build trust among communities and facilitate the return of displaced persons. We also welcome the new civilian

protection strategy and efforts to mediate among armed groups. We support MINUSCA in its efforts to continue promoting the participation of women in the African Initiative and advocating for violence-reduction programmes, which have proved to be effective in the implementation of local peace agreements and the voluntary disarmament of many young people involved in militia and armed group activities.

Moreover, we encourage the joint five-year agreement to support the Government in the immediate and long-term deployment of internal defence and security forces with the support of MINUSCA and in coordination with the European Union Military Training Mission, with a view to restoring State authority in the Central African Republic.

In conclusion, we welcome the ongoing and active engagement of regional and subregional organizations, as well as the participation of African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the group of facilitators of the African Initiative, whose political efforts towards peace and cooperation are essential to the reconciliation process. All of that is being carried out in full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Central African Republic, as it is the Central Africans themselves who have the primary responsibility to achieve peace and stability in their own country.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): Let me join you, Mr. President, in congratulating and welcoming Ambassador Cohen. We very much look forward to working with him closely.

We thank all three briefers for their very thorough and factual presentations. We wish to express our deep appreciation to them and their teams for their tireless efforts aimed at ensuring peace and stability in the Central African Republic, given all of the very challenging circumstances. Their presence and participation here in the Chamber is the best example of the excellent cooperation we enjoy with regard to the Central African Republic between the United Nations and the regional organizations. It is also an excellent example of the cooperation that can exist between the European Union and the African Union.

Let me also offer our most sincere condolences over the loss of life among Blue Helmets. All attacks on the peacekeeping personnel are unacceptable, and we hope that the perpetrators will be identified and held accountable. For Poland, as a Vice-Chair of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel continues to be the top priority.

Poland welcomes the progress made so far in the political process under the leadership of President Touadera. We applaud the support provided by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the African Union, as well as the engagement of regional and subregional actors, in advancing the mediation and reconciliation process. We consider the African Initative for Peace and National Reconciliation to be the main framework for resolving the crisis in the Central African Republic. It is crucial that the process include all political, social and ethnic groups, as well as the representation of women. We commend the progress made by the panel of facilitators on consultations with armed groups, and remain positive that the Initiative could enhance the peace process in the country and lead to a lasting agreement.

Unfortunately, despite some positive developments, the security and humanitarian situation in the country has not improved. We strongly condemn repeated acts of violence targeting civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeepers. We are also concerned about the increase in incitement to ethnic and religious hatred and violence. Such activities result in numerous casualties and impede the peace process and economic recovery.

Poland welcomes the efforts made by the Government and local communities to further enhance security measures, curb criminality and support reconciliation mechanisms, but much still remains to be done. We commend the Central African Republic authorities for the progress made in the establishment of a Special Criminal Court that would investigate allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity during more than a decade of ethnic and religious conflict in the country. Those efforts bring hope for the possibility of breaking the cycle of revenge and violence in the Central African Republic and show the determination of the Central African Republic authorities in constituting a credible, legitimate and reliable judicial system.

It is extremely important to stop impunity and restore State control throughout the entire country. With regard to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga's briefing, we also welcome the progress in setting up the magistrates. In

our view, the return of public administration throughout the country's territory is crucial for ensuring the long-term stability of the Central African Republic, as building institutions based on the principles of good governance and the rule of law is key for economic, social and political development.

The fragile situation in the Central African Republic shows that comprehensive support from the international community is essential. In that context, we strongly believe that the active support of MINUSCA for the progressive redeployment of the Central African Armed Forces, trained by the European Union Military Training Mission, is crucial. Transparent and coordinated cooperation among all international forces in the Central African Republic is a critical means for ensuring a unified approach to the operationalization of the Central African Armed Forces and its compliance with the highest standards.

In conclusion, Poland praises the important work carried out by MINUSCA, the European Union Military Training Mission and other international partners in the Central African Republic. I would like to assure Mr. Onanga-Anyanga and his entire team of our full support for his efforts.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I wish to start by expressing our appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the African Union (AU) to the Central African Republic Moussa Nébié and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio for their respective briefings.

Two years after the Government of President Touadera took office, we note the progress made by the Central African Republic towards a gradual restoration of State authority through the deployment of district administrations in all parts of the country, together with the return of basic social services. That progress should not be overlooked. However, as rightly stated by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2018/611) and stressed by Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga, whose work we greatly appreciate, such gains remain slow and fragile. What worries us most is the fact that the first half of this year has witnessed a deterioration of the security situation despite the incremental change that we have seen in other areas.

Today I want to take this opportunity to highlight what emerged from the discussion at the level of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, which we chair. Based on the suggestion of members of the Security Council, we organized a series of discussions on specific conflict situations in Africa, not so much to rework the discussion that takes place here in the Council but to facilitate a genuine exchange of views on how to support national and regional efforts in the spirit of African solutions to African problems.

In that context, we convened a meeting last month to discuss the situation in the Central African Republic and how to prevent a reversal of the gains made and to sustain peace. Assistant Secretary-General Keita, the African Union Special Representative, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission configuration and the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic, whose presence here today we very much welcome, briefed the Ad Hoc Working Group. Unlike at previous meetings, the discussion that followed truly lived up to expectations, with members frankly sharing their views in a much more interactive manner.

That is why we felt that we needed to bring that to the attention of the Security Council so that the outcome of the discussion at the level of the Ad Hoc Working Group feeds into our deliberations here today. Serious concern was expressed about the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation and the socioeconomic challenges, particularly over the past two months, as well as the danger of inflammatory rhetoric and sectarian violence. Serious concern was expressed in that connection with regard to the role of non-citizens fanning the conflict through the use of incendiary language. Much of that is resource-driven and was seen as a very serious challenge.

The illegal exploitation of minerals and other resources, primarily as the main source of funds for supporting the operation of the armed groups, including with the assistance of actors near and far, was also raised as an alarming development. Furthermore, the growing number of attacks against the peacekeepers of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and their impact in hindering efforts towards the gradual restoration of State authority in the country was considered very disturbing.

In terms of the way forward, the importance of promoting dialogue and reconciliation through engagement with the local community, as well as supporting the expansion of State authority, in particular in remote areas, including by strengthening the capacity

of the Government and its reconciliation efforts, was greatly emphasized. That is no substitute for addressing that and other challenges, as Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga also stressed a short while ago. Promoting dialogue with neighbouring countries to ensure border security was also underscored. That was highlighted as extremely critical.

Members expressed support for the AU's efforts in the context of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation and stressed the need to leverage the United Nations and AU synergy, welcoming the recent joint visit by Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and Commissioner Chergui. With regard to MINUSCA, the fact that the Mission needs a more robust posture, adequately resourced with the necessary financial and logistical support, was very well recognized. We heard Special Representative Onanga-Anyanga say that as well in his briefing a short while ago.

In the end, what emerged very clearly during the discussion was that the Central African Republic requires greater attention from the Council. That clearly appears to be self-evident given the current situation and the need to do everything possible to prevent a reversal of the little progress made over the past two years.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Mr. Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic, and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio, Force Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission, for their briefings.

Under the leadership of President Touadera, the political process in the Central African Republic has made positive progress. Meanwhile, the security situation in the country remains fragile, with continuing armed clashes among armed groups. The country therefore still faces challenges in its effort to achieve lasting peace and stability. Recently, the second round of consultations under the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation was held successfully.

China welcomes that development. We call on the relevant parties to bear in mind the overall national and State interests, to take concrete steps to implement a ceasefire agreement, to promote disarmament and the peace and reconciliation process, to stop the incitement of hatred, and to overcome differences through dialogue and consultation.

China commends the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for its important role in maintaining stability in the Central African Republic. We strongly condemn the attacks against peacekeepers and express our condolences and sympathy to the bereaved families. We support the Government of the Central African Republic in conducting prompt investigations in order to bring the perpetrators to justice.

China also supports MINUSCA's efforts to improve its protection and early-warning capability and to take concrete and effective steps to ensure the safety and security of its personnel. China supports the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and other regional and subregional organizations in their efforts to promote a political process in the Central African Republic. The United Nations, the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations should enhance their cooperation with the Government of the Central African Republic so as to promote national reconciliation and peace in the country in a joint effort to help it to achieve peace and development as soon as possible. China also calls on the international community to continue to support to the Government of the Central African Republic in its State capacity-building efforts and to provide the necessary assistance to the Government in order to maintain security and stability, respond to the humanitarian crisis and address the root causes of the conflict.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): We would like to thank our three briefers and welcome Ambassador Jonathan Cohen, the new Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States, to the Chamber today. We wish him every success. My delegation has the following comments to make.

First, with regard to the political front, we note the efforts and commitment of the Government of the Central African Republic to making progress in restoring State authority throughout the country, despite its persistent challenges, which include limited resources, weak public institutions and insecurity, as other speakers, including my Polish colleague, have pointed out. Like Ambassador Alemu of Ethiopia, as expressed in his inspiring and meaningful statement, we too are concerned about the intensifying sectarian rhetoric and

intercommunal disputes, which have resulted in higher levels of armed conflict, thereby undermining every effort to achieve national reconciliation and worsening the country's already fragile security situation. We note the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in supporting peace initiatives at the local community level with the aim of building confidence and reducing violence.

We also pay tribute to the panel of facilitators for the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation and note the importance of continuing a dialogue with armed groups and seeking peaceful means of disarmament. We therefore join others in urging all armed groups to lay down their arms. We recognize the role that President Touadera has taken in leading and supporting peaceful political processes within the framework of the African Initiative. The first meeting of the International Support Group on the Central African Republic, with the participation of the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of Central African States and the United Nations, is an important step in that direction. Coordinating the actions of regional and international partners will help the country to consolidate its gains and move forward towards the key goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063, as well as the AU's effort to silence the guns by 2020. We support the work of MINUSCA in resolving the multifaceted security issues in the Central African Republic using both military and non-military methods, including comprehensive measures to prevent young people from participating in armed violence.

Secondly, with regard to the security front, we stress the importance of ensuring that the Government continues to implement its national security strategy and joint concept for the deployment of the defence and internal security forces, as well as its management of weapons and ammunition, with the support of MINUSCA and other partners. We also commend the invaluable contribution that the European Union Training Mission has made to training Central African forces.

We also want to note the importance of the initiative that other States in the region have taken to intensify the bilateral commissions between the Central African Republic and Cameroon, Chad and Sudan. We hope they will enable effective cooperation not just in addressing transnational security threats but also in revitalizing economic ties. It is important that regional and international partners continue supporting the Government's efforts to address vital issues of security and justice, as well as such important aspects of development as providing basic services to the population and creating jobs.

Thirdly, on the humanitarian front, against a backdrop of underfunding and a reduced humanitarian presence, the increasing numbers of internally displaced people and refugees from the Central African Republic in neighbouring countries demand the international community's immediate attention.

Lastly, in expressing our full support to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga and his able team, we would like to emphasize that with the Government's clear vision of the way to tackle the challenges it is facing, we have an opportunity before us and we should continue to strive to give the people of the Central African Republic the support they deserve and expect.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the African Union Bédializoun Moussa Nébié and Brigadier General Herminio Teodoro Maio for their briefings.

We share the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on the Central African Republic (S/2018/611) about the continuing unstable situation in the country, especially on the security front. A significant part of its territory is still controlled by armed groups. Despite some positive progress on the problem of expanding Government administrative control, the local authorities are still not fully functioning. The bloody inter-ethnic and interreligious encounters continue, and the confrontations between gangs are worsening. There are intense clashes between armed groups over territory, resources and key trade routes. The rhetoric of hate speech is a catalyst in this. We want to emphasize that such behaviour should have no place in a country whose citizens are striving for peaceful coexistence.

We would like to express our sincere condolences for the continuing losses among peacekeepers. The courage of the Blue Helmets in the Central African Republic cannot be overestimated. We fully support the efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional

Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and of Mr. Onanga-Anyanga personally. We realize that the Mission has a difficult job, considering the size of the country and the presence of so many armed groups.

We are also concerned about the further deterioration of the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation. We urge all the parties to the conflict to ensure humanitarian access to the victims and the authorities to continue to work to create conditions conducive to the safe voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes.

There can be no question that one of the key conditions for the long-term stabilization of the situation in the Central African Republic is the implementation of the programme for the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation of combatants. We hope that future progress with that initiative, and with involving the main armed groups in it, will help to normalize the situation. The road map for a settlement in the Central African Republic adopted through the mediation of the African Union in Libreville on 17 July 2017 constitutes a good foundation for launching an inclusive political dialogue. We share positive assessment in the Secretary-General's report of the progress made in implementing the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, for which the panel of facilitators conducted two full-fledged rounds of meetings on the ground with all the leaders of the main armed groups with the aim of consolidating their demands for the holding of further negotiations with the Government. In our view, it will be crucial to ensure that all parties to the Libreville agreements make additional efforts to implement the relevant provisions as soon as possible.

We note the steps that Bangui is taking in the area of security-sector reform with a view to restoring its control throughout the country. That is needed to help normalize the situation in the Central African Republic, including with the support of the international community, and to fulfil the national defence plan approved by President Touadera in order to gradually transfer responsibility for running the country to its lawful authorities. For our part, we want to affirm that Russia will continue to support the authorities of the Central African Republic in reforming their national security sector. In 2017 our instructors trained 200 Central Africans, and we plan to hold similar training courses for 400 members of the Central African armed forces in 2018. We also intend to increase our humanitarian assistance, particularly where providing the population with medical services is concerned.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Ms. Kpongo (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on two fronts: first, on your country's presidency of the Security Council for the month of June and the skill with which you are carrying out your duties, and secondly, on your country's organization of the FIFA World Cup, which is creating such excitement. I also thank you for convening today's very important meeting.

I had not intended to the floor after the very relevant statements by all of the previous speakers, in particular the briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/611) by Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). What can I add to the analysis we have heard of the security and humanitarian situation in the country, not to mention the area of human rights? I strongly support the Special Representative's anxious calls to the Council to supply MINUSCA with the capabilities it needs to respond to its intensely challenging area of operations and the increasing number of hotbeds of tension. The panel of facilitators of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic is doing commendable work under the leadership of Mr. Nébié. We hope that the consultations will culminate in an understanding among all the parties to the crisis in the Central African Republic. The ultimate goal is to establish dialogue in a calm environment, which is a sine qua non for a genuine return to peace.

To respond to the remarks by the representative of France, on behalf of my Government, I would like to reiterate our sincere gratitude to the troop-contributing countries whose citizens have given their lives in the cause of peace. I thank all our bilateral and international partners for their ongoing efforts and unwavering support to the authorities of the Central African Republic.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8292

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8292nd meeting
Friday, 22 June 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Kuzmin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Li Yongsheng
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Dah
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gasri
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Sweden	Mr. Vaverka
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

Election of a member of the International Court of Justice

Memorandum by the Secretary-General on the election of a member of the International Court of Justice (S/2018/487)

Note by the Secretary-General on the election of a member of the International Court of Justice: list of nominations by national groups (S/2018/488)

Note by the Secretary-General on the election of a member of the International Court of Justice: curriculum vitae of the candidate (S/2018/489)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Election of a member of the International Court of Justice

Memorandum by the Secretary-General on the election of a member of the International Court of Justice (S/2018/487)

Note by the Secretary-General on the election of a member of the International Court of Justice: list of nominations by national groups (S/2018/488)

Note by the Secretary-General on the election of a member of the International Court of Justice: curriculum vitae of the candidate (S/2018/489)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now proceed to the election of one member of the International Court of Justice, in accordance with Article 13 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, to fill the seat that has become vacant following the resignation of Judge Hisashi Owada as a member of the Court, effective on 7 June 2018.

I draw the attention of the Council to document S/2018/488, which contains the name of the candidate nominated by national groups: Mr. Yuji Iwasawa (Japan).

I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received a letter addressed to me by the Legal Counsel, dated 20 June 2018, informing me, on behalf of the Secretary-General, that after the established deadline for nominating candidates, namely, 16 May 2018, the national groups of Slovenia and Paraguay submitted additional nominations to the Secretariat. I should like to draw the Council's attention to the fact that those nominations relate to the candidate already nominated by other national groups and whose name therefore already appears in document S/2018/488. The Legal Counsel recommended that, in accordance with established practice, I inform Council members orally on the day of the election about the decision of the aforementioned national groups. I am also informed that the Legal Counsel made a similar recommendation to the President of the General Assembly.

The nomination of the aforementioned national groups is as follows: for Mr. Yuji Iwasawa, Slovenia and Paraguay.

The Security Council has before it a memorandum by the Secretary-General, contained in document S/2018/487, describing the present composition of the Court and setting out the procedure to be followed in the conduct of the election. I should like to remind the Council that under Article 10, paragraph 1, of the Statute of the International Court of Justice,

> "Those candidates who obtain an absolute majority of votes both in the General Assembly and in the Security Council shall be considered as elected."

The required majority in the Security Council is eight votes.

If, in the first ballot in either the General Assembly or the Security Council, the candidate does not receive an absolute majority, then pursuant to rule 61 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, a second ballot will be held. Balloting will continue in the same meeting until the candidate has obtained the absolute majority of votes.

The voting will be held by secret ballot. When we proceed to the vote, members of the Council will receive a ballot containing the name of the candidate. No withdrawal will be accepted once the ballot papers have been distributed. However, it will be possible to withdraw between ballots.

Members of the Council will be requested to place an "X" in the box next to the name of the candidate if they wish to vote for the candidate. If the members do not wish to vote for this candidate, they should leave the box blank. Only the candidate whose name appears on the ballot is eligible for election. Therefore, votes may be cast only for the candidate whose name appears on the ballot papers.

I should like to inform Council members that, in accordance with established practice, the ballot papers in the Security Council will not be counted until it has been verified that the ballot papers in the General Assembly have also been collected. The Council will remain in session pending the receipt of that information.

Only when a candidate has obtained the required majority of votes in the Security Council shall I

communicate the result to the President of the General Assembly, and I shall request the Council to remain in session, pending the receipt from the President of the General Assembly of the result of the voting in the Assembly.

The Council will now proceed to draw lots to select two delegations to serve as tellers.

The names of the delegations of France and Sweden have been drawn. I request each of them to appoint one of their members to serve as teller.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Baikari (France) and Mrs. Anderberg (Sweden) acted as tellers.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): May I take it that the Council is now ready to proceed with the election of a member of the International Court of Justice?

It is so decided.

I am informed that the General Assembly is now ready to proceed with the voting process.

I request the Conference Officer to distribute the ballot papers.

Members of the Council should place an "X" in the box next to the name of the candidate, if they wish to vote for the candidate.

* * *

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I take it that all the members of the Council have now voted and I ask the Conference Officer to collect the ballot papers.

* * *

The President (*spoke in Russian*): All the ballot papers have been collected. I should like to remind Council members that in accordance with the established practice, the ballots will not be counted until it has been verified that the ballot papers in the General Assembly have also been collected. The Council will remain in session pending the receipt of that information.

* * *

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I have now been informed that the ballot papers have been collected in the General Assembly.

The counting of the ballots in the Security Council will now begin. The tellers will now count the ballots. As per practice, there will be two independent countings of the ballots, one by each teller. I should like to remind Council members that in accordance with established practice, I shall wait for the General Assembly to complete its count before I announce the results of the voting in the Security Council. The Council will remain in session.

* * *

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The result of the voting is as follows:

Number of ballot papers:	15
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	15
Number of abstentions:	0
Required majority:	8
Number of votes obtained:	
Mr. Yuji Iwasawa	15

Accordingly, the candidate, Mr. Yuji Iwasawa, received the required majority of votes in the Security Council. I have communicated the result of the vote to the President of the General Assembly in writing.

I should like to inform the members of the Council that I have just received from the President of the General Assembly the following letter:

(*spoke in English*)

> "I have the honour to inform you that, at the 97th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, held today for the purpose of electing a member of the International Court of Justice, Mr. Yuji Iwasawa obtained an absolute majority of votes in the General Assembly."

(*spoke in Russian*)

As the candidate, Mr. Yuji Iwasawa, received the required majority both in the Security Council and the General Assembly, he is therefore duly elected as a member of the International Court of Justice for a term beginning today, 22 June 2018, until 5 February 2021. I should like to congratulate him and wish him every success in the high office to which he has been elected.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to thank the tellers for their assistance in the conduct of the elections.

The Security Council has thus concluded its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.